

# *al-Ghazzali*

## *Alchemy of Happiness*

(*Kimiyyā al-sa'adat*)

Hujat al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid  
Muhammad Ghazzali Ṭūsī

VOLUME 1

TRANSLATED BY  
JAY R. CROOK

INTRODUCTION BY  
LALEH BAKHTIAR

SERIES EDITOR  
SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

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The first complete English translation of *The Alchemy of Happiness*, this is Imam Ghazzali's Persian summary of his famous Arabic treatise on morality and ethics in Islam, *The Revival of Religious Sciences*. In this work, Ghazzali details the many pitfalls, snares, and distractions—internal and external—that lie in wait to divert the traveler of the Way from attaining the goal which Ghazzali calls “spiritual happiness.” But there are also defenders, guides, and helpers which the traveler may enlist in his aid if he recognizes them. In *The Alchemy* Ghazzali has provided the traveler of the Way with a critique of faith and a detailed guidebook to guide him safely to that goal. If he follows its counsels, he will successfully pass through the awesome tribunal of the Resurrection to achieve everlasting salvation, the highest degree of which is that state in which there remains neither fear of the terrors of hell nor appetite for the pleasures of Paradise. [It is the pure ecstasy of the loving Divine Presence:] absolute spiritual happiness.

Jay R. Crook (Muhammad Nur) spent most of his working life in the Middle East, especially in Iran and Saudi Arabia. Hired by the Peace Corps as a field representative, he finished in 1971 as Deputy Director in the Iran program. He then enrolled in the Doctoral Program of Persian Literature for Foreigners at Tehran University and received his Ph.D. in 1978.

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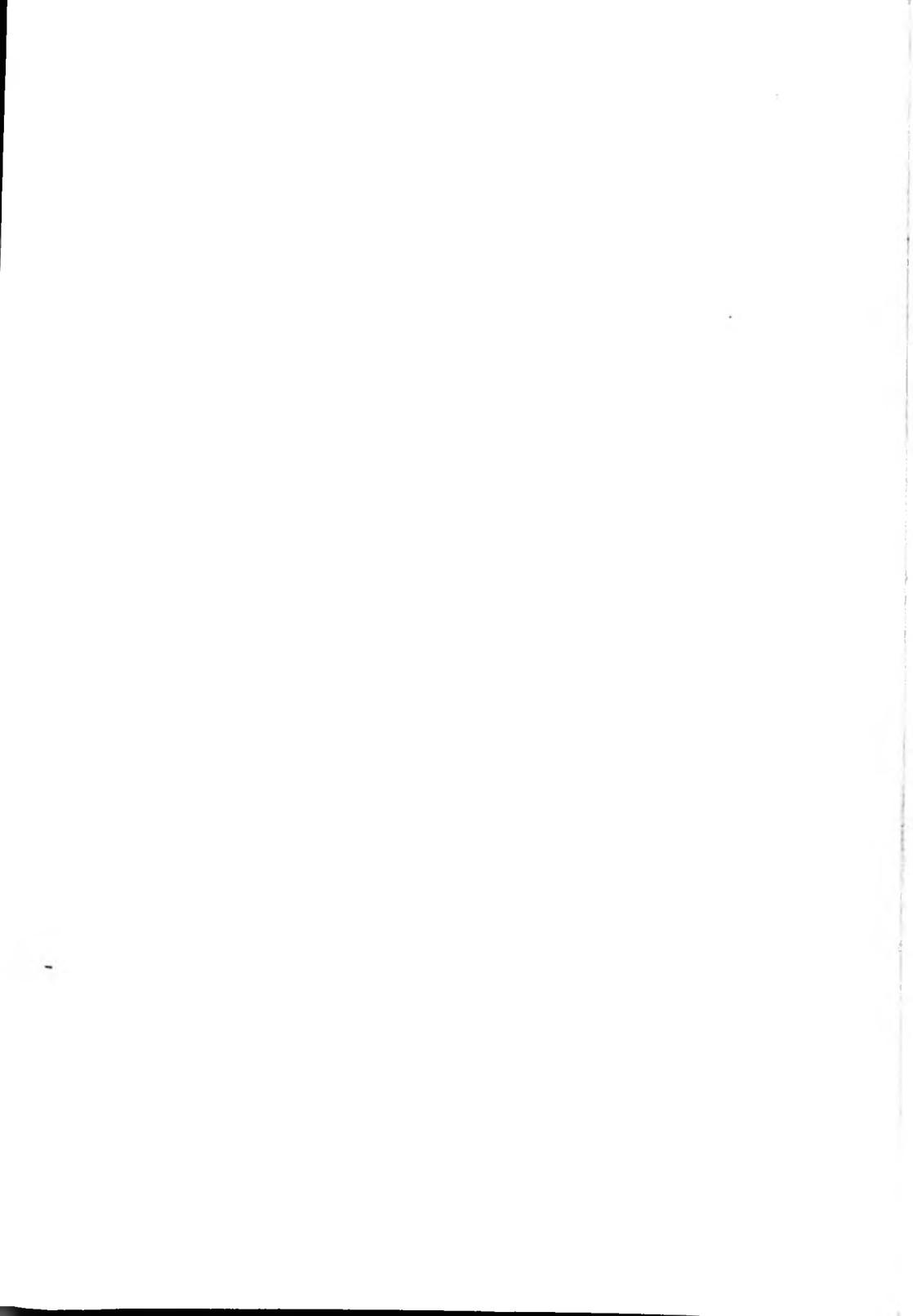
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*IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE*

# THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS

(*Kīmiyā-yi Sa‘ādat*)

BY

Hujjat al-Islām

Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī Ṭūsī  
(AH450-505/1058-1111CE)

## VOLUME I

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JAY R. CROOK (MD. NUR), PH.D.

INTRODUCTION BY  
LALEH BAKHTIAR, PH.D.

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GREAT BOOKS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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The cypress tree bending with the wind, the source for the  
paisley design, is a symbol of the perfect Muslim, who, as the  
tree, bends with the wind of God's Will.

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*In memory of Muhammad Ayyub  
of Mathurapur, Sylhet,  
who introduced me to Islam*

Also by Jay R. Crook

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## FOREWORD

God's last plenary revelation to present humanity came in the form of a book, al-Qur'ān, which for Muslims is also the book and is in fact known also as *Umm al-Kitāb* or Mother of All Books. While the peerless majesty of the revelation reduced the first generation of Muslims to silence, the echo of the Noble Book and its encouragement of acquiring knowledge could not but result in a culture which cherished books and honored scholars. This unmistakable emphasis of the Noble Quran on knowledge, combined with the synthetic power of Islam to absorb the learning of older civilizations to the extent that they conformed to the doctrine of unity (*al-tawḥid*), gave rise to a vast and diversified intellectual life which for the past thirteen centuries has produced millions of works dealing with nearly every field of knowledge from the religious sciences, theology and philosophy to the natural sciences, from law to music, and from poetry to politics.

Islamic civilization was a lake into which flowed streams from many civilizations: Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Byzantine, Persian, Indian and even Chinese. In this lake, the various elements became synthesized into a new body of water which itself became the source for numerous tributaries that have watered the various lands of *Dār al-Islām*. Furthermore, Islamic civilization created works which had profound influence upon at least three major civilizations outside of the Islamic world: the Far Eastern, the Indian and the Western besides creating numerous masterly works whose influence has remained confined within the Islamic world. Such works in both categories contain a precious message for humanity as a whole and need to be made known by the world at large today.

Most treatises in Islamic civilization were written in the language of the Quranic revelation, Arabic, followed by the only other universal language of Islamic civilization, Persian. But important works have also been written in Turkish, Urdu, Bengali, Malay, Swahili, Berber, and numerous other languages including Chinese and, during this century, even English and French. Nor have all the works in Arabic been written by Arabs, nor all the works in Persian by Persians. Numerous treatises in Arabic were written by Persians and later Turks, Indians, Berbers and Black Africans while many books in the Persian language were composed by Indians, Turks and Central Asians. The body of works written within the confines of Islamic civilization belongs to the whole of that civilization and in classical times, in fact, important books became known rapidly from Morocco to India and later Southeast Asia.

The Great Books of the Islamic World series seeks to make some of the most important works produced in Islamic civilization, primarily in Arabic and Persian, available in English so that these treasures of Islamic thought can be appreciated by those who do not possess the facility to benefit from them in the original languages. The audience to which the series addresses itself is predominantly the Western English reading public, but the series is also meant for Muslims themselves who have facility with the English language and also for non-Muslims and non-Westerners who are now becoming ever more knowledgeable in English and who might wish to gain deeper knowledge of the Islamic intellectual universe.

We hope that with the help of God, Exalted is His Majesty, this series will be successfully completed and that by providing a clear and readable translation of some of the great masterpieces of Islamic thought in English, this series will be able to create better understanding of Islam in the world at large and make accessible some of the treasures of traditional thought which, although Islamic in genesis, belong to all human beings who are interested in true knowledge in whatever form it appears, *wa mā tawfiqunā illā billāh*.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr  
Washington DC, June, 1997

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

*In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

In AH450/1058CE Hujjat al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid Imām al-Ghazzālī was born at Tus (*Tūs*), now a suburb of modern Mashhad, but then the most important city of that region of Khorasan, what is now northeastern Iran. He was educated first at Tus, then at Gorgan, and finally at Nishapur. The famous Seljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk invited him to his court. So impressed was the vizier by Ghazzali's scholarship that in AH484/1091CE he appointed him chief professor at the Nizamiyah College in Baghdad. Ghazzali became critical of the Muslim philosophers who had been influenced by Neoplatonism, and he passed through a spiritual crisis that at times left him incapable of lecturing. In AH488/1095CE, he abandoned his teaching and left Baghdad on the pretext of performing the Greater Pilgrimage. After making arrangements for his family, he disposed of his worldly goods and became a poor Sufi. He spent time at Damascus, Jerusalem, and Makkah, before returning to his birthplace where disciples soon collected around him. He was persuaded to return to teaching at the Nizamiyah in Baghdad in AH499-500/1105-6CE, where he remained until a year before his death that took place at Tus AH505/1111CE at the comparatively young age of 53.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of his active and eventful life, possibly feeling the need to increase the audience for his message, Ghazzali embarked upon the writing a Persian summary of his encyclopedic Arabic treatise on religion and the Way, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā* "Ulūm al-Dīn).<sup>2</sup> It differs from the Arabic original in that Ghazzali prefixed his summary with a *Prolegomena*, which perhaps represents his desire to express some later thoughts on a number of topics (see the Table of Contents). It represents about 10% of the Persian text of the *Alchemy*.

In the Islamic world of his era, Arabic was the medium for serious works of religion and science, as was Latin in the Europe of the same period. After the Arab conquest of Iran in the first Islamic (7th CE) century, Pahlavi, the Persian of the overthrown Sassanian dynasty of Iran, flickered out, except for a liturgical use among the remaining Zoroastrians. As the general population gradually converted to Islam,

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<sup>1</sup> EB, and other sources.

<sup>2</sup> In HK's Introduction to his edition of the text, he attributes the *Revival* to the beginning of the decade AH488-99/1095-1105CE, while the *Alchemy* was written about two-thirds of the way through that period, say about AH495/1102CE.

Arabic became the language of government and study. During the third Islamic (9th CE) century, Persian—now written in the easier Arabic script and with ever-increasing borrowings from Arabic—began to re-emerge as a literary language. With the patronage of provincial courts, notably the Samanids based in southern central Asia and eastern Khorasan, Persian poets began to produce that body of epics, songs, and *belles lettres* that have won the admiration of the world. Commentaries on the Quran, histories, and other more serious works in Persian quickly followed.

It was natural, therefore, that Ghazzali, a native of Khorasan, the birthplace of this Persian literary renaissance,<sup>3</sup> would want to present a less technical version of the *Revival* for the edification of his fellow Persian-speakers. The fruit of this desire, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, of which this is the first complete translation into English, is a compendium of religious law, ethics, and morals with illustrative supporting anecdotes. In it, Ghazzali refers to the *Revival* many times as a reference for further elaboration of his arguments and more technical explanations. Nonetheless, he assumes that his readership has more than a passing acquaintance of Arabic and the contents of the Holy Quran, as educated people in the West would have been expected to be familiar with Latin and Greek as a matter of course until the 20th century. *The Alchemy of Happiness* contains many citations from the Quran in Arabic as well as other occasional passages left without Persian translation. For less familiar passages, or when he wants to point up some aspect of the Arabic being quoted, Ghazzali supplies a translation or an expansion. The translator has not always included his verbatim translations, but has included many of his expansions, paraphrases, or departures from the Arabic.

The aim of *The Alchemy of Happiness* is to bring man into that state of love for and acceptance by God Most High that Ghazzali calls “(spiritual) happiness” (*sa‘ādat*). The *Alchemy* is nothing less than a manual, a guidebook, for the wayfarer’s progress to that goal. For Ghazzali, the purpose of this world is to gather the provisions—good deeds (*hasanāt*) and spiritual reward (*thawāb*)—for the next world. There are many pitfalls, snares, traps, and distractions lying in wait for the careless wayfarer. Ghazzali treats these in considerable detail in the Third Pillar (The Destroyers). At the same time, God in His wisdom has provided the traveler with the means to avoid them—if he takes heed, and these are elaborated upon in Fourth Pillar (The *Deliverers*). The goal is to achieve the highest state of love for God in which the self is annihilated in God, but the soul continues. In this state there remains

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<sup>3</sup> Modern Khorasan is the northeastern section of Iran, but in Ghazzali’s time, the term referred to a much vaster area, stretching well into modern Afghanistan and Central Asia.

neither fear of hell nor appetite for Paradise; just the pure ecstasy of the contemplation of the Divine Presence. Not all will achieve this, but there are lesser states of spiritual reward desirable in themselves, represented—for the good—by the levels of Paradise; and—for the evil—by its contrary: the levels of hell.

There is terror and delight, fear and hope, and consolation and eloquent exhortation in this wide-ranging work; it aims directly at the heart and the soul of the reader as it investigates the many aspects of the religious experience. The problems, spiritual dilemmas, and crises of faith of Ghazzali's medieval world are, in essence, not so different from those of our own era. I must confess that at times I was deeply affected, spiritually and intellectually, by Ghazzali's persuasive words. I hope that I have been able to convey at least some of those feelings in this translation.

The organization of this enormous undertaking is straightforward. After a brief Introduction and a list of the Contents, there is a Prolegomena of sections called "Topics" ("unwān"), four in number, in which various kinds of necessary basic knowledge are expounded. They represent about 10% of the text and lay the groundwork for the main part of the book that is divided into four "Pillars" (*rukñ*), which should not be confused by the reader with the more famous Five Pillars of Islam. The First Pillar (*The Acts of Worship*) is concerned with the performance and significance of religious duties. The Second Pillar (*Mutual Relations*) deals with a person's role in relation to the world and its demands. The Third and Fourth Pillars, as noted above, are concerned with avoiding the dangers (*The Destroyers*) while on the journey and with achieving salvation (*The Deliverers*) at its end. Each of these Pillars consists of ten chapters, so that the entire work has forty-four basic subdivisions, preceded by a short Introduction. Having said all that he wanted to say, Ghazzali does not linger and ends the *Alchemy* rather abruptly with a brief prayer.

It should also be remarked that there is not total consistency in headings between the two editions I have used for this translation, nor is there total internal consistency. Exact wordings vary, and I have reproduced these inconsistencies rather than attempting to force them into a single uniform format. The general purport of these variations, however, is the same and no confusion should arise about content because of them.

The internal organization of each chapter varies, but it generally contains exposition, analyses, and recommendations followed by illustrative anecdotes drawn from the Traditions of the Prophet, the Companions, pre-Islamic prophets, and noted scholars and ascetics of the early Islamic era. Those sections labeled "Excursus" (*faṣl*) are something like Ghazzali's footnotes or digressions.

Ghazzali's Persian is fluent and not so heavily Arabicized as one might expect, considering the subject matter. Taking advantage of the multiple meanings of the conjunction *kīh*,<sup>4</sup> he piles clause upon clause, sentence upon sentence, and argument upon argument, as though he were addressing the reader personally.

Unlike Arabic and English, Persian does not have gender-specific pronouns. Both Arabic and English employ the "general" masculine when not specifying gender or when members of both sexes are present, or being referred to jointly. "Everyone should bring his books" means "each person (male or female) should bring his (or her) books."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the female reader should not feel slighted or ignored when the translator uses this general masculine. Ghazzali certainly did not intend to restrict salvation and spiritual happiness to males. In the Holy Quran, God promises both to the deserving "believing men and believing women," equally, many times.

Ghazzali uses the third person singular ("one should do this," "he should do that") much of the time in his text, so that when he departs from this to address the reader directly, the effect is quite forceful. He occasionally switches to *thou* (sing.) or *ye* (pl.) in mid-sentence! Mention of the second person brings up another point. In classical Persian and Arabic, distinctions are made between the second person singular and plural, as in Elizabethan English. It is a great loss to English that we no longer make that distinction in the modern language. There are occasions when confusion can result. Does "you" mean just one individual or a whole group being addressed? In the case of the Arabic Quran, this distinction can be crucial. Similar problems can arise in Persian. Therefore, in this translation, I have translated the second person in accordance with the classical (now chiefly poetic) rules. *Thou* and its forms are used for the second person singular, rather than the more impersonal and less precise *you*. Attendant verbs are consequently affected. In any event, *thou* better expresses the hoped for intimacy between God and man and Ghazzali and his reader than does *you*.

**Technical terms:** There are many religious and spiritual terms that have no exact one-word equivalent in English. The practice in this translation is to render them into English, usually with the original Persian or Arabic word in parentheses, especially at the time of first use. *Namāz* (Persian) and *salāh* (Arabic) are commonly translated as "prayer," but in reality, these are formal religious services with strict rules and are not at all like the image the word brings to the Christian mind of conversation with God, sometimes in a set prayer such as the

<sup>4</sup> *kīh* can mean: that, he/she who, while, whereas, and, then, nay, whom, lest, for, whether, because, saying, namely, who?, etc. The possibilities seem endless.

<sup>5</sup> "Everyone should bring their books," though frequently heard (and encountered in print), is an obvious solecism.

Lord's Prayer, and sometimes a simple outpouring from the heart. These things exist in Islam, but they are called *du'a* (supplicating God) and *munājāt* (conversation with God). They often follow *namāz/ṣalāh*, but are not part of it, at least in a technical sense. *Namāz/ṣalāh* is a religious service, akin to a mass in the Roman Catholic Church.

To emphasize this distinction, *namāz/ṣalāh* is translated as "formal prayer." There are different kinds of formal prayer, some obligatory, some not. There are different times for the prayers, etc., some obligatory, some not; so in order to convey exactly what it is Ghazzali is talking about, *namāz-i ẓuhr* is translated as "the noon obligatory formal prayer"; cumbersome, but accurate. When one is pouring one's heart out to God, sitting alone, it is called "conversation with God" (*munājāt*). I have tried to be as explicit as possible when translating these unfamiliar terms. When the meaning cannot be incorporated fully into the text without becoming a distraction, more information will be found in the footnotes.

A word about the texts: When the late Prof. Ahmad Aram (AA) set out to prepare an edition of this work, he examined an edition printed in India during the 19th century at the beginning of his effort. He considered it a good text and remarks: "It appears that it was prepared with extreme care and research," but he notes regretfully that corruptions had crept into the text. After examining other manuscripts and editions, he finally decided to use the copy belonging to a Mr. Sabuhi as the basis for his edition, even though it is missing about half of the fourth part. He supplied the missing parts and filled lacunae by comparison with several other manuscripts in the National Library (Tehran). His edition was first published in AHS1320/1941CE.

The first half of the critical edition by Dr. Husayn Khadiv-Jam (HK) was first published in AHS1354/1975CE. Together with access to a recently published Persian translation of the *Revival*, he was able to refer to half a dozen additional manuscripts for the preparation of his edition. In addition, unlike the AA text available to me, the HK edition is well supplied with indices and rather more notes, making the translator's task much easier. As a result, I have used the HK text as the primary text for making this translation and have used the AA text secondarily. The edition of the HK that I have used was published, with a new introduction, in AHS1361/1982CE. When I have felt it would be useful, I have occasionally incorporated material from the AA text to supplement the HK text. Such material is inserted between brackets. Other differences are mentioned in footnotes.

It should be remarked that all of the enumerations, divisions, and headings found in the present text are not necessarily the work of Ghazzali himself. Later copyists and redactors doubtless had a hand in the present shape of the text. The two texts I have consulted agree in the

larger divisions but differ in subdivisions. I have endeavored to present the divisions in a way that will be the most useful for the reader.

About some of the mechanics of the translation: Punctuation and paragraphing, as we know them, were not used in Arabic and Persian until recent times, and then in a rather casual imitation of Western (especially French) practice. Even now, Persian punctuation is at best erratic and occasionally misleading; to save space perhaps, paragraphing is often skimpy. This is true of both HK and AA editions of the *Alchemy*. Instead of punctuation, classical writers in Persian and Arabic simply joined clauses with an “and” or a more appropriate conjunction when the context warranted it, as does the King James version of the Bible which follows a similar Hebrew practice. There were rarely graphic divisions, probably because (handmade) paper, though much cheaper than vellum, was still expensive and it had to be used to the maximum. Chapter headings were often given in a different colored ink (usually red) or by means of overlining.<sup>6</sup> Many of these “and’s have been omitted in translation as contrary to English style and I have tried to be more generous in paragraphing.

Brackets are used in accordance with their use in the HK text, although material added from the AA text is also bracketed, with a note. Because of the plethora of parentheses and brackets added to the text, Ghazzali’s words and phrases of a parenthetical nature, which would normally be enclosed by parentheses, are distinguished by dashes in this translation.

Parentheses also enclose material I have inserted as clarification, to indicate words justified by the text but not used in it; for clarifying numbers inserted for the reader’s convenience; and for the transliterations from Persian and Arabic of important or significant words for the serious student (see “Italics” below). In Quranic quotations, the portions between parentheses are expansions I have added from the Quran for purpose of clarification; usually in a place where Ghazzali would assume that the reader would be familiar with the full text. When Ghazzali uses one part of a proper name (see “Names” below), I have sometimes found it necessary to include a more familiar part of the name in parentheses. The exception to this is the (S) put after the name or title of the Prophet and (R) or (A) for certain other persons when it is part of the text (see below). I should also like to point out here that the word “Practice,” when capitalized, refers to the Practice of the Prophet (*sunnatu rasūli-llāh*), as recorded in the Traditions and biographies.

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<sup>6</sup> Overlining: drawing a line above a word or words as opposed to the English practice of drawing a line under them; that is, underlining.

With respect to the transliterations, Persian forms are given preference in transliteration where the usage differs from Arabic. The system of transliteration (see p. xxii) is based upon what is becoming the standard usage. However, when applied to Persian, there are some differences. The consonant *w* in Arabic becomes *v* in Persian. To use *w* in Persian words would be misleading. There are also some changes with respect to vowels: the Arabic *kisrah* (short *i*) is generally pronounced short *e* in Persian, but will appear here as *i*, as in Arabic to avoid confusion. In Persian pronunciation, the Arabic consonants *th* and *s* become *s*; *h* is *h*; *dh*, *d*, *z* are all pronounced *z*; *t* is *t*; *‘ayn* is reduced to a glottal stop (*hamzah*) or ignored; *q* commonly is pronounced like *ghayn*. On the other hand, Persian has four letters (*p*, *ch*, *zh*, and hard *g*) not found in standard Arabic.

I have followed the orthography presumably used by Ghazzali as evidenced by the texts. His usage occasionally departs from what is now considered standard, particularly with respect to *hamzah* which, when followed by a *kasrah* (the short vowel *i*), he converts into *y*. For example: Persian *fadāyil* (virtues) for Arabic *fadā’il*; *ṣāyim* (fasting/faster) for *ṣā’im*. At the end of a word, it is usually dropped: *balā* for *balā'* (affliction). (These modifications, especially the latter, are also common in modern standard Persian.)

In addition, over the centuries there has been a considerable shift in Persian usage with respect to words borrowed from the Arabic feminine ending, the so-called “round *t*.<sup>7</sup> In Arabic, it is unpronounced except when followed in liaison with a vowel: then it is pronounced as *t*. The Persian practice is to write the letter *H* when it is unpronounced or the letter *t* when pronounced. Ghazzali’s text represents an earlier stage in this process and many words now ending in *h* in standard Persian end in *t* in the *Alchemy*. Examples are numerous, such as *irādat* for (modern) *irādah*.

The system of transliteration employed in this work is based on orthography, not pronunciation. The differences in Arabic chiefly involve the “sun” letters and the “moon” letters, the weak letters, and the vowelizing of *hamzatu-l-waṣl*.<sup>8</sup> For Persian, the principal difference is the

<sup>7</sup> The *round t* is an *h* written with the two dots of a *t* over it. In Arabic, this is the standard feminine singular ending. In Persian orthography, the dots are never written (except in set phrases borrowed from Arabic) and it becomes either an unpronounced *h* or a pronounced *t* and is written as such.

<sup>8</sup> The Arabic alphabet consists of 28 (some scholars say 29, including *hamzah* as a separate letter), half of which are “sun” letters and the other half “moon” letters. The significance of this in pronunciation is that when the definite article *al* precedes a noun or an adjective, it is pronounced *al*, as in *al-qamar* (the moon). When the definite article precedes a sun letter, it is written the same (*al*) but pronounced according to the first letter of the following word, as in *ash-shams* (the sun). The “weak” letters are *alif*, *w*, and *y*. Their usage at the end of a word can create difficulties, but that need not concern

silent *w* after *kh*. For example, *khwud* is pronounced *khud*. *N* before *b* (and also before *p* in Persian) is pronounced *m* in both languages.

Italics are used for words, phrases, and sentences that are translated from those portions of the text that are in Arabic rather than Persian and to emphasize the occasional English word. In addition, transliterated Persian or Arabic words are given in italics, usually between parentheses, in the footnotes and occasionally in the text, especially in the four Topics. Those who know Persian and Arabic may notice stylistic differences between Persian and Arabic. In the transliterations, I have normally given the word as it appears in the text. Sometimes verbs have been put into the infinitive form. Certain set phrases, such as: "may He be honored and glorified," "God Most High," "may God have mercy upon him," "may God be pleased with him," and "peace be upon him," though actually Arabic, are not italicized as they are commonly employed and readily understood in Persian.

It is customary to use some phrase of blessing such as *ṣalāwāt Allāh ḥalayhi wa sallam* (May the blessings and peace of God be upon him!) following the utterance of the Prophet's name or station. This is represented by "(S)." However, the attentive reader may note that there are some exceptions to this usage and it is omitted: in this respect I have, for accuracy, followed the text, omitting it when it is not found in the principle text and no disrespect is intended. Furthermore, in some places the symbol (A) follows the name of other prophets. It is in place of the phrase *ḥalayhi al-salām* (upon whom be peace) usually uttered following such a name. (R) is used to represent the Arabic phrase *May God be pleased with him/her/them* (*raḍiya-llāhu ḥalayhi/hāhim*).

Ghazzali generally uses the word *bandah* "servant or bondman," meaning here "servant (of God)," to indicate any human being. The form is slightly deprecatory, but in this case, it reflects man's humble position with respect to his Creator. In this context, it means something like "person" or "human being" or "man." I have translated it as "servant (of God)," except where it clearly refers to servants or slaves.

Persian is an Indo-European language and possesses a structure of verbal inflections and tenses similar to that of English, but their usage varies. I have generally translated them according to the rules of English usage. The word *guft*, meaning "he/she said" has frequently been changed in translation to "ask, reply, answer, declare, cry," etc., depending upon the context, in part to clarify who is saying what, and in accordance with English practice. For some reason, the repetition of *guft*

the reader here. The *hamzatu-l-wasl* involves changes to the vowel *a* of *al* and these changes occur according to the case of the preceding word, too complicated to go into in this place. Consult any standard Arabic grammar for details of these and a few other idiosyncrasies of Arabic orthography. The Persian alphabet has all of the Arabic letters plus four consonants not found in Arabic.

does not sound boring in Persian and most Persians have no problem following the changing speakers, but our English ears require a little variation and help in distinguishing speakers. Names are often repeated, between parentheses, for identification and clarity. Because Persian verbs are fully conjugated as to number and person, pronouns are used much less frequently than they are in English. In English, only the form of the 3rd-person singular of the present tense (and compound tenses formed with the present) is distinctive, except in the case of the verb *to be* which has three forms instead of two in the present tense. (This does not include the 2nd-person singular forms of classical English that I have also employed, as noted above.)

Persian usage of plurals differs from that of English. In translation, I have followed the English rules. Interestingly enough, Ghazzali also uses the active “they said to him” with the passive meaning of “it was said to him,” as is the practice in informal English speech. When no agent is apparent, I have usually rendered these in the passive voice, as exactly following Ghazzali’s form can occasionally lead to confusion and yet another footnote. Also, “this” and “that” are sometimes used differently in Persian; I follow English usage. In this regard, it may be pertinent to point out that Persian does not have a definite article “the” (Arabic does: *al*), but it does have an indefinite postfix *i* meaning “a/an” (neither English nor Arabic has this); this is omitted in transliterations except in phrases. When a Persian speaker wishes to stress definiteness, he uses the demonstrative adjectives “that” (*ān*) or “this” (*in*).

Persons and unfamiliar places are explained in the footnotes the first time they occur. One should refer to the Index for unannotated names to locate where they are explained.

**Names:** In preparing biographical notes about the people Ghazzali quotes or refers to in the *Alchemy*, one encounters the problem of Arabic names, the basis for most Muslim names, Arab and non-Arab, in the time of Ghazzali and—to a great extent—in the present as well. First is the *kunyah* (nickname), then the personal or given name (*ism*), then the pedigree (*nasab*), then the epithet (*laqab*), and finally the surname of origin or tribe (*nisbah*). Poets usually used pen-names (*takhalluṣ*) rather than their own personal names.

For males, the *kunyah* is compounded with *abū*, literally “father.” (There is a corresponding form for women, *umm* meaning “mother.”) In the HK text, Ghazzali more often uses the dialectal *Bū* form in the *kunyah* (nickname), instead of the more standard *abū* (the AA text generally uses *Abū*). To avoid confusion and for easier indexing, all of these have changed to the standard *Abū* form throughout the text. Sometimes these “nicknames” are real, as when *Abū Muḥammad*, for example, really has a son of that name. At other times, they are metaphorical or based upon some peculiarity. *Abū Hurayrah*, for

instance, was one of the most important of the narrators of Traditions of the Prophet. His *kunyah* means “Father of the Kitten,” as he was fond of cats. Others are less flattering: Caliph Mansūr’s *kunyah* was Abū Dawāniq, “the Father of Farthings,” a reference to his parsimoniousness.

The given or personal name follows. These may be simple: Muḥammad, ‘Alī, ‘Umar, etc., or compound ‘Abd al-Rahmān, Ni‘mat Allāh, etc. In Persian-speaking areas, the given name may of Iranian origin (Rustam, Jamshid, Firuz, etc.) and in Turkic areas of Turkish origin (Timūr, Tughril, etc.) This is followed by the pedigree; that is the names of father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and so on. In Arabic usage these are separated by *bin* meaning “son of.” Often this becomes *ibn* when it is used as a quasi-*kunyah* as in Ibn Sīrīn (Son of Sirin), Ibn Ishaq (Son of Ishaq), Ibn Hishām (Son of Hisham), etc. Men are often better known by that form than any other part of the name. When *ibn* is the first element of the name, it is written that way, but succeeding elements of the pedigree are separated by *bin*.<sup>9</sup>

The *laqab* is often honorific, descriptive, or titular, as in *al-Tawīl* (the Tall), *al-‘Awar* (the One-eyed), *Jihāngīr* (Persian: “World-Taker), *Nizām al-Mulk* (Order of the Kingdom).

The *nisbah* often gives us personal information about birth, origin, sect, tribe, clan, and even profession. These can be compounded into a series: *al-Hāshimī al-Kūftī al-Warrāq* (of the tribe of the Hashimites, from or living in the city of Kufah, the paper dealer). In the case of Ghazzali, we have Abū Ḥāmid (*kunyah*) Muḥammad (*ism*) bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad (*nasab*) (no *laqab*) al-Ṭūsī al-Ghazzālī (*nisbah* meaning from Tus, the Weaver).<sup>10</sup>

Dates are given with the Islamic lunar dating (AH) first and the Common Era dating second as: AH55/675CE. Because the Islamic calendar is lunar, its year is shorter. This results, where precise information is not available in overlapping entries: AH776/1374-5CE or AH638-9/1240CE, depending upon primary source. The months are explained in footnotes as they occur in the text, but in order to give the

<sup>9</sup> *Bin* is written with the two letters *b-n* while *ibn* is written <sup>2</sup>-*b-n*. The *i* in both forms is an unwritten short vowel. The classical usage seems to have been to pronounce *b-n* as *ibn*; I have fully vowelized texts reflecting that pronunciation. However, scholarly works in which the word is transliterated support the alternative *bin* pronunciation. With the decay of case endings in spoken Arabic, this has become more prevalent. In this translation, following the orthography and to make a distinction between *alif-b-n* and *b-n*, I use *ibn* for the former and *bin* for the latter.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to the information contained in the *Handbook of Oriental History* for this exposition of the problem of Arabic names. Ghazzali’s name in the Arabic edition of *The Revival* in my possession gives his name and titles thus: *Al-‘Allāmat al-Imām Hujjat al-Islām Abī Ḥāmid Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī* (The Very Learned, the Imam, the Proof of Islam, Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazzali).

reader an idea of the relationship of the months to each other, the following is their order: *Muharram, Safar, Rabi' al-Awwal, Rabi' al-Thānī, Jumādā al-Awlā, Jumādā al-Ākhirah, Rajab, Sha'bān, Ramadān, Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa'dah, Dhū al-Hijjah.*

Each month is either 29 or 30 days long, depending upon the appearance of the new moon. The day commences at sunset, as it does in the Jewish calendar. No extra month is inserted to keep it in step with the solar calendar as is done in the Jewish lunar calendar. I have also made occasional use of the Islamic solar calendar used in Iran and Afghanistan. It is designated AHS. Weights and measures are explained as they occur. They vary greatly from time to time and place to place and exact equivalents are hard to come by. Estimates are provided.

In translating the quotations from the Holy Quran, I have referred to several well-known English translations, but the one to which I have referred more often than any other is that of Muhammad Pickthall, *The Glorious Qur'an* (see the Bibliography.)

**Footnotes:** These are devoted to explanations of points in the text unfamiliar to the general reader. In addition, short biographical notes are given (when information is available) about the several hundred persons quoted or referred to in the text, usually at the first occurrence. It should be remarked that in practice, the personal name is often avoided, and an individual may be referred to instead by his *kunyah* (*Abū Bakr*), *nasab* (*Ibn Hishām*), *laqab* (*Nizām al-Mulk*), or *nisbah* (*al-Būkhārī*). Readers should note that *Yahyā bin Mu'ādh* may be listed in the index as *Yahya Mu'adh* (Persian usage) or *Yahya bin Mu'adh* (Arabic usage). Ghazzali uses both forms.<sup>11</sup> Where confusion is likely, additional footnotes direct the reader to where the pertinent information may be found.

While nothing can replace the original, I hope that the reader will gain some sense of the importance and scope of Ghazzali's Persian masterpiece from this translation and meditate upon its relevance of its prescription for salvation in the world of the present day.<sup>12</sup> I pray that he will overlook any inadequacies or infelicities in the translator's effort to bring this great book to a wider audience. May God Most High grant us all a share of the blessings of the vision offered by Imam Ghazzali. *Peace!*

JRC (Md. Nur), Tucson, 2008

<sup>11</sup> It may be remarked that in older Persian an *iḍāfah* was used in place of the *bin*. *Yahyā Mu'ādh* would have been read *Yahyā-yi Mu'ādh*, meaning "Yahya the son of Mu'adh," as does the Arabic *Yahyā bin Mu'ādh*.

<sup>12</sup> Ghazzali's works were well known to the European scholars of the High Middle Ages who knew him as Algazel.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Besides the standard conventional and bibliographical abbreviations, a few less familiar ones have also been used in the text:

AA	= Ahmad Aram text	chs.	= chapters
AH	= Hijri, Lunar	d.	= died
AHS	= Hijri, Solar	fl.	= flourished, active
Ar.	= Arabic	HK	= Husayn Khadiv text
BCE	= Before Common Era (= BC)	Per.	= Persian
c.	= circa (about, approximately)	pl.	= plural
CE	= Common Era (= AD)	rgd.	= reigned
ch.	= chapter	sing.	= singular
		v.	= verse
		vv.	= verses

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## TRANSLITERATIONS

Arabic Letters	ص	س	Short Vowels
Consonants	ص	د	í a
،	ط	ت	í u
ب	ظ	ز	í i
ت	ع	'	Long Vowels
ث	غ	gh	بá bā
ج	ف	f	بú bū
ح	ق	q	بí bī
خ	ك	k	Diphthongs
د	ل	l	بó baw
ذ	م	m	بý bay
ر	ن	n	Persian Letters
ز	ه	h	پ p
س	و	w	چ ch
ش	ي	y	ژ zh
			گ g

# INTRODUCTION

## BY LALEH BAKHTIAR, PH.D.

*“...be not like those who forgot God and [eventually] God caused them to forget their ‘self’...” (Q. 59:18-19)*

There is nothing more timely today than a translation of this remarkable work on Islam by al-Ghazzali for two reason: First of all, the results of recent studies of medicine-psychology and religious belief<sup>13</sup> confirm that the religious model works in the healing process so traditional wisdom must be made available in English for all researchers as well as readers to be able to access it and draw upon it for areas of further research. Secondly, at a time when the world is confused by the varying beliefs of Muslims and is interested in studying what the majority of the world’s Muslims believe, the works of al-Ghazzali provide the perfect opportunity.

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali was born in the city of Tus, northwestern Iran, in AD 1058.<sup>14</sup> He studied in Tus until he was twenty-seven when he moved to Baghdad. He was appointed as a professor at the Nizamiyyah college there when he was thirty-three. After four years of a strenuous schedule, he underwent a spiritual experience which convinced him that all of the knowledge he had gained was useless in comparison to gnosis (spiritual knowledge) or experiential knowledge of the Divine Presence. He realized unless he left his position and was free to search for this knowledge deeper within himself without worldly distractions, he would never attain it. He therefore provided for his family and left for Damascus and other well-known cities at that time.

When he was forty-eight, he returned to his birthplace where he lived for the next five years until his early death at the age of fifty-three.<sup>15</sup> He left behind over 400 works, among them being his famous *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*) which he wrote in Arabic. Over 2300 pages long, it is a compendium of Islamic

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<sup>13</sup> See works such as *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief* by Herbert Benson; *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* by Andrew Newberg, Eugene D'Aquili and Vince Rause; and *Handbook of Religion and Health* edited by Harold G. Koniz, Michael McCullough and David B. Larsen.

<sup>14</sup> Other well known writers and poets born in Tus include Abu Yazid Bistami, Husayn bin Mansur Hallaj, Abu Said Abi-l-Khayr, Nizam al-Mulk, Firdawsi and Umar Khayyam.

<sup>15</sup> See Bibliography to the Introduction for the numerous books that detail the life of al-Ghazzali. It is interesting to note that al-Ghazzali wrote the Alchemy of Happiness when the First Crusade ruled Jerusalem. Saladin arrived on the scene seventy-seven years after al-Ghazzali's death.

practices. A few years after he finished the *Revival*, he felt the need to write the same sort of compendium on being a Muslim in Persian. This is the entire work here translated into English for the first time which al-Ghazzali called the *Alchemy of Happiness*. It is a masterful textbook on traditional psychology.<sup>16</sup>

While modern Western psychology focuses on describing emotions, behavior or cognition, that is, what we feel, do and think without recourse to the basic principles or causes, traditional psychology is based on the same three centers, but like all traditional sciences, includes much more. Because of including metaphysics, theology, cosmology and the natural sciences as the basis or underlying principles for what we feel, do or think, it becomes a holistic psychology. The goal of traditional psychology is to assume the noble character traits, to overcome our ego which competes for our attention with our God-given instinct to attend to the One God. In this view, there cannot be two wills and therefore our free will has to be disciplined to submit to God's will (*islām*).

The word psychology comes from the Greek words "psyche" or "soul" and "logos." Psyche also means breath, spirit and refers to the animating principle of the universe. Logos means "word" and in the traditional view it refers to "the Word of God." The science of psychology, then, when it is true to its name, is the study of the Word of God within the human soul or spirit.

Al-Ghazzali's psychology is essentially that of monotheism and unity, the world view that "there is no god, but God" or "there is no deity, but God." It is to see the universe and all that is in it as aspects of the One God. The world view of monotheism (*tawhīd*) forms the underlying basis for traditional psychology.

By the word "tradition" we mean *al-dīn* which has been defined as: "truths or principles of a Divine Origin revealed or unveiled to mankind through a messenger along with the ramifications and application of these principles in different realms including law, social structure, art, symbols, the sciences and embracing Supreme Knowledge along with the means for its attainment."<sup>17</sup>

Tradition (*al-dīn*) is a point which is at one and the same time the Center and Origin of our being. Traditional psychology is oriented towards helping the individual as well as the human community find that Center as we prepare for the return to our Origin.

A monotheist (*hanif*) like al-Ghazzali regards the whole universe as a unity, as a single form, a single living and conscious thing, possessing will, intelligence, feeling, and purpose, revolving in a just and

<sup>16</sup> See below for the definition of traditional psychology which historically was called the science of ethics or practical wisdom (*hikmat al-‘amali*).

<sup>17</sup> Knowledge and the Sacred, p. 68.

orderly system in which there is no discrimination no matter what one's gender, color, race, class, or faith be. All comes from God and returns to God, while a polytheist (*mushrik*) views the universe as a discordant assemblage full of disunity, contradiction, and heterogeneity containing many independent and conflicting poles, unconnected desires, customs, purposes, wills, sexes, sects, colors, races, classes, and faiths.

The monotheistic worldview sees the universal unity in existence, a unity of three separate relationships: (1) our relationship with others, nature and the universe; (2) our relationship with God; (3) our relationship with our "self." These relationships are not alien to one another; there are no boundaries between them. They move in the same direction. Al-Ghazzali expresses this when he writes:

Then, know that there is a station in spiritual insight where, when a person reaches it, he really sees that all that exists is interconnected, one with another, and all are like one animate being. The relationship of the parts of the world, such as the heavens, the earth, the stars to each other, is like the relationship of the parts of one animate being to each other. The relationship of all the world to its Director—from one aspect; not from all aspects—is like the relationship of the kingdom of the body of an animal to the spirit and intellect which are its Director. Until a person recognizes this, that *Verily, God created Adam in His image*, it cannot be comprehended by his understanding.<sup>18</sup>

Other non-monotheistic religious worldviews see the Divinity—or even the plural of this—as existing in a special, metaphysical world of the gods, a higher world as contrasted with the lower world of nature and matter. They teach that God is separate from the world, created it and then left it alone. In the monotheistic worldview, God has never left and is the destination of the Return. In this view, our "self" fears only one Power and is answerable to only one Judge; turns to one direction (*qiblah*), orienting all hopes and desires to only one Source. A belief in monotheism gives us a sense of independence and liberation from everything other than God and a connectedness to the universe and all that it contains. Submission to God's Will alone liberates us from worshipping anything other than God and rebelling against anything else that purports to be God.

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<sup>18</sup> Alchemy, pp. 867-8.

## AL-GHAZZALI'S THREE FUNDAMENTALS

Al-Ghazzali sees the basis for traditional psychology leading to self-development—which in essence is the greater struggle—as consisting of three fundamentals—the same three fundamentals confirmed by modern psychology and scientific studies—*affect, behavior and cognition* (the ABC of psychology). The first fundamental is knowledge (*cognition, awareness or consciousness*). The second he calls states (*affect or emotion*) that that knowledge or awareness produces in us. The third he calls act or deed—the action that results from our emotion that came from our knowledge or awareness of something.

### *THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL: KNOWLEDGE (COGNITION)*

According to al-Ghazzali, knowledge should be used to come to understand the articles of belief rather than accepting them on faith alone. The articles of belief include: the belief that God is One; the belief that God sent Prophets to guide mankind to Him and that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger and last Prophet who will be sent (until the end of time when Jesus (A) will return) and that the Quran is the last revelation; the belief in angels and the Scriptures; and the belief that after death we will be resurrected in the Hereafter and judged by God who will reward or punish us depending upon our intentions. Al-Ghazzali says: “It is the states of the heart, the place of our intentions, that holds us accountable.”<sup>19</sup>

### *BELIEFS*

Our beliefs are the guiding principles that give meaning and direction to our life. They filter our perceptions of the world. When we freely choose to believe something is true, a command is delivered to our spiritual heart (mind) telling us how to represent what we have come to believe to be true. When the process has been accomplished with Divine Grace (defined by al-Ghazzali as: the harmony, agreement and concord of our will and action with God's will), our beliefs can become our most effective force for creating the positive and good in our lives.

In explaining the importance of coming to the realization of the Oneness of God oneself and not accepting it because someone has told us, al-Ghazzali says:

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<sup>19</sup> This is a clear distinction with modern secular psychology which is limited to only treating a human being part by part instead of holistically. See Alchemy p 817.

Know that the first duty incumbent upon whoever becomes a Muslim is to know and believe the meaning of the utterance *There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God*, which he pronounces with his tongue, understands in his soul, and believes so that he entertains no doubt about it. When he has believed and his soul is established firmly upon (that belief)—so that no doubt can touch it—it is sufficient as the basis of being a Muslim. Knowing it with evidence and proof is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim. The Prophet (S) did not command the Arabs to seek proofs, to study theology, or to look for doubts and the replies to them; rather, he was content with belief and faith.<sup>20</sup>

He then defines what belief in submission to God's Will (*islām*) means:

Know that thou hast been created and that thou hast a Creator Who is the Creator of all the universe and all that it contains. He is One. He has neither partner nor associate. He is Unique, for He has no peer. He always was; His existence has no beginning. He always shall be; there is not end to His existence. His existence in eternity and infinity is necessary, for annihilation cannot touch Him. His existence is by His own essence. He needs nothing; but nothing is unneedful of Him. Rather, He is established by His Own essence, and everything else is established through Him.<sup>21</sup>

Al-Ghazzali mentions five sources for our beliefs:

(1) Our environment: how we grow up; models of success or failure we learn from; what is right and what is wrong; what is possible and what is impossible.

(2) Our experiences and events as we grow up.

(3) Knowledge: what we know and do not know; that we continue to educate our “self” from “the cradle to the grave.”

(4) Results we have seen achieved in the past, learned from the stories of past people in the Quran.

(5) Setting new goals to achieve future results.

Future results depend upon how we incorporate our beliefs—how we view the world—into our own self-image. According to al-Ghazzali, our firm and certain belief in the Oneness of God should lead us—as it did Prophet Muhammad (S)—to the following beliefs:

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<sup>20</sup> Alchemy, p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> Alchemy, p. 99.

(i) The belief that everything happens for a reason. We look for the good and positive in whatever happens.

(ii) The belief that there is no such thing as failure, only results or outcomes. If we are able to train a falcon to hunt for us, al-Ghazzali uses as an example, we can train and discipline our rational faculty to control our passions. Al-Ghazzali says that we should not expect immediate results. Change is gradual. We need to develop patience, a great virtue in his view.

(iii) The belief that we must take responsibility for whatever happens. No matter what happens, know and believe that we are in charge. The Prophet never blamed others for whatever happened. He never allowed himself to be a victim. As the Quran says: "*God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves.*" (Q. 13:11)

(iv) The belief that we need to learn from other people who are our greatest resource. Treat them with respect and dignity as the Prophet did.

(v) The belief that we need to challenge our profession or line of work and excel in it. Explore new ways of doing things. Increase our sense of curiosity and vitality.

(vi) The belief that there is no success without commitment. Know our outcome in the Hereafter as the Prophet knew. Develop our sensory responses so we know what we are getting and then continue to refine it until we get what we want. Study the key beliefs of the Prophet and then hold tight to them.

In al-Ghazzali's view, if we firmly believe we are among those "who submit to God's Will" (*muslim*), then with our cognition, affect and behavior as understood from the monotheistic point of view as our foundation, we can submit in everything that we say or do. What we believe to be true becomes possible when we know what we want—to be one who submits to God's will—and believe we can achieve it.

### *STRATEGIES*

Developing a strategy is to duplicate our belief system. When we organize the way we think, the way we feel and the way we behave according to our belief system, we have developed a strategy. The ingredients of our strategy are our human experiences. Our experiences are fed from our five outer senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and touching. Our five senses motivate us to action. When we are aware of what they perceive and keep their perceptions in line with our belief system, we have developed a successful strategy.

The amounts we use of the information provided by our senses is monitored by our spiritual heart (mind). Are the images small or large,

bright or unclear, close up or far away? How we put these together, their order and sequence clarifies our strategy.

With our resource being our “self” consisting of body, spirit, soul and spiritual heart (it is our spiritual heart that centers us), we want to learn what we need to do to organize this resource. How can we have our goal and belief achieve the greatest potential? What is the most effective way to use the resource of our “self” and its subparts? The most effective strategy has always been modeling the behavior of others who have the same goal and the same belief. For the believer, this model is that of the Messenger Muhammad (S) who was the perfect human being.

Strategies he used included performing the prescribed fast as well as formal prayer, supplication and continuous recitation of the revelation. For the believer, revelation brought both a Law and a Way. Both serve as strategies of how to approach life in the manner in which the model approached life, and knowing that our model did not always do things exactly the same way.

The strategy of Quranic recitation is yet another form of discipline. One of the verses of the Quran: “*Remember Me and I will remember you,*” (Q. 2:152) makes this form of supplication a very rich traditional strategy to attain spiritual energy.

### *THE SECOND FUNDAMENTAL: STATES (AFFECT, EMOTION)*

Our belief establishes states (emotions, affect) which then result in our actions. In this relationship and all others, our state of mind is important because that determines our emotion and our emotion determines how many resources are available to us. Our emotions depend upon how we feel physically—our breathing, posture, etc.—and how we represent the world to ourselves internally. When we have cleared our spiritual heart of hypocrisy in our acts of worship, our actions are to worship God and we are at the beginning stages of the greater struggle according to al-Ghazzali.

States (affect, emotion) are held or transformed in terms of psychology through moral values that energize us. Our behavior is the result of the state we are in at the time. Our emotional state governors our behavior. Behavior is the result of how we represent the information from our senses internally as well as our muscular tension, posture, physiology.

We have the resources we need to succeed. We have to learn how to access them. We need to learn to take direct control: Once we learn to manage our states (emotions), according to al-Ghazzali, we can modify our behavior. There is a difference of how people react to the same state. The difference depends on their model.

One of the best methods which al-Ghazzali uses over and over again in the *Alchemy* is that of what is today called reframing: changing the way we evaluate what something means. If our culture teaches us that change is a failure of opportunity for learning, we need to become resourceful, to realize that nothing has power over us but the power we give it by our own conscious thoughts. The meaning of any experience depends on the frame we put around it. If we change the context or reference point, the process changes.

We can reframe by context reframing or content reframing. With context reframing, we take a bad experience and show it in another way. With content reframing, we drastically change how we see, hear, or represent a situation. We learn to change the way we represent a situation so we feel differently about it. Now we are at the level of choice instead of reaction. By learning to reframe, we change our emotions so that they empower us. We can either associate or disassociate. If we associate consciously, we learn to change the way we represent things, thereby changing our behavior. We have to aim for congruence between our spiritual heart (mind) and body.

#### *CLARITY OF MORAL VALUES*

Clarity of values gives us a sense of who we are and why we do what we do. If we have an internal conflict between our values and our strategy, we will not succeed. Values determine what really matters in life. They provide us with a basis from which to make sound judgments about what makes life worth living.

Al-Ghazzali refers to verses 23:1-10 of the Quran as an example of believers who have succeeded by incorporating Quranic values:

Surely, the ones who believe have prospered, those, they who in their formal prayers are ones who are humble; and those, they who from idle talk are ones who turn aside; and those, they who the purifying alms are ones who give; and those, they who of their private parts are ones who guard, except from their spouses or from what their right hands possess. Truly, they are ones who are irreproachable. Whoever looks for something beyond that, then those, they are the ones who are turning away. And those, they who their trusts and their compacts are ones who shepherd. And those, they who over their formal prayers are watchful. Those, they are ones who will be inheritors, those who will inherit Paradise. (Q. 23:1-11)

Al-Ghazzali then summarizes the verses to describe a person of good character:

A person of good character is he who is modest, says little, causes little trouble, speaks the truth, seeks the good, worships much, has few faults, meddles little, desires the good for all, and does good works for all. He is compassionate, dignified, measured, patient, content, grateful, sympathetic, friendly, abstinent, and not greedy. He does not use foul language, nor does he exhibit haste, nor does he harbor rancor in his heart. He is not envious. He is candid, well-spoken, and his friendship and enmity, his anger and his pleasure are for the sake of God Most High and nothing more.<sup>22</sup>

In the *Alchemy* (as well as in the *Revival*), al-Ghazzali devotes the major part of the work to clarity of moral values by describing in great detail what he calls the Destroyers and the Deliverers. He not only describes them in each of those parts, but also offers treatment as to how to get rid of them (the Destroyers) or how to incorporate them into our personality (the Deliverers). Doing this clarifies the moral values of the one who submits to God's Will.

As a result of the performance of the acts of worship, if accompanied by Divine Grace, the one who submits to the Will of God will be receptive to the adoption of positive dispositions (the Deliverers) like temperance, courage, wisdom, and justice and be able to avoid negative dispositions (the Destroyers) like anger, fear of other than God, cowardice, lust, envy, apathy, preconsciousness (knowing that you do not know), unconsciousness (not knowing that you do not know) and overconsciousness (knowing but deceiving the self about it), but only on the condition that others benefit from the positive dispositions one has attained. This, then, makes it incumbent on the one who has submitted to the Will of God to come to know and act upon the commands that underlie the relationship of self to others.

## *ENERGY*

The entire human organism is a complete system that makes use of energy transformed from food and air to satisfy its various natural dispositions. Perception (external and internal senses) and motivation develop, according to traditional psychology, from the animal soul. Motivation is the seat of impulses towards inclinations which are imprinted on the external or internal senses and then, through filtering into what is called the practical intellect (the mind), a response is given. Three energy sources are active in this perspective: natural (*venial*, *tabī'i*), vital (arterial, *nafsānī*), and nervous (*haywānī*). These transformed energies are distributed throughout the body. The heart is

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<sup>22</sup> Alchemy, pp. 465-6.

considered to be the point of contact between the energy of the body and that of the self.

Without the necessary energy, which according to al-Ghazzali comes from spiritual practices, we reach a state of hopelessness and despair. For instance, if someone asked: “If one has been condemned to hardship, what is the benefit of the greater struggle?” Al-Ghazzali explains this attitude:

As for that which thou askest: “If one has been condemned to hardship, what is the benefit of striving?” the words are correct, and from another aspect, void. These words are correct in that they are cause of thy perdition, for the sign that a person has been condemned to hardship is that these words fall upon his soul and he makes no effort, neither sowing nor reaping. The sign that a person has been condemned to death is that when he becomes hungry, the thought occurs in his heart not to eat. He says: “What good is bread to me?” He does not extend his hand to eat and he does not eat until, by necessity, he dies. If he has been condemned to poverty, he says: “Of what use is sowing seed?” so he neither sows nor reaps. And he for whom happiness has been decreed, he has been made aware that wealth and life have been decreed for him. They have been decreed because he has cultivation, business, and consumption. Therefore, this decree is not in vain; rather it is for (certain) reasons.<sup>23</sup>

### *THE THIRD FUNDAMENTAL: ACTIONS (BEHAVIOR)*

Knowledge alone is not sufficient for we who accepted the trusteeship of nature and were endowed with the Divine Spirit which includes our abilities to choose, to discern, and to gain consciousness of our “self.” It is through actions based on knowledge that the centered self benefits another as proof of being centered. The major pillars include ritual purity (*tahārah*) and ritual prayer (*salāh*), ritual fast (*sawm*), the paying of the alms tax (*zakāh*), the pilgrimage (*hajj*), counseling to positive dispositions and preventing the development of negative ones (*amr bil mā'rūf wa nahi an al-munkar*) and *jihād* or struggle in the Way of God, the greater struggle of which is the inward struggle of the self (*al-jihād al-akbar*). The last two are the major concern of traditional psychology.

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<sup>23</sup> Alchemy, p. 872.

***BONDING POWER OR RAPPORT***

Bonding and communicating are aspects of action—proof of the extent of transformation through attaining the goal that we had intended. The power to bond with others is an extraordinary human power. It comes in the true sense when bonding develops from the heart and not from either the intellect or the passions. It comes from a deep love for one's fellow human being and arises when we try to meet the needs of others before our own needs, much like a mother with her new born child.

Al-Ghazzali quoting from the Quran, the Prophet and the Companions mentions how important it is to eat with other people and to perform the formal obligatory prayer with other people.

***COMMUNICATORS***

Believers should conceivably be master communicators on all three levels—with self, with others and with the Source. How we communicate determines the quality of our lives. Through spiritual disciplines like, for example, prescribed fasting, believers are given an opportunity, a challenge. If they are able to communicate that challenge to themselves successfully, they will find the ability to change. This is not to accept prescribed fasting as only a religious duty but rather as a divine challenge, as a chance for growth instead of an experience which limits self. In this way, we will become master communicators because our very life will communicate our vision, goal and beliefs to others to help them change for the better, as well.

***RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS***

Al-Ghazzali discusses knowledge (cognition), states (affect) and action (behavior) in three relationships: our relationship with others, our relationship with our Creator-Guide, and our relationship with our “self.”

The model for this is the *sunnah* of Muhammad (S) who said, “I was sent to complete the noble qualities of dispositions,” explaining that God loves the positive dispositions and not the negative ones. Al-Ghazzali also quotes another Tradition in this regard, “By Him in whose hand is my life, no one shall enter paradise except the one who has positive dispositions.” Al-Ghazzali says, “God taught [Muhammad (S)] all the fine qualities of disposition, praiseworthy paths, reports about the first and last affairs, and matters through which one achieves salvation and reward in future life and happiness and reward in the world to come.”

Quoting the Traditions, al-Ghazzali shows the relationship established by the Prophet with others.

And the Messenger (S) said: "There are not two persons who love each other for the sake of God that the one more beloved by God is the one loves the other the most." And he said: "God Most High says: 'My love is a right for those who visit one another for My sake, who love each other for My sake, who are generous to each other with their wealth for My sake, and who aid each other for My sake.'" And he said: "On the Day of Resurrection God Most High will say: 'Where are those persons who loved each other for My sake so that I may keep them in My shadow on this day when there is no shade for the people in which to take refuge?'"

And he said: "There are seven persons on the Day of Resurrection who, when there will be no shade for anyone, will be in the shadow of God Most High: the just leader, the young person who began worshipping God Most High at the beginning of his youth, the man who leaves the mosque with his heart attached to the mosque until he returns to it again, two people who love each other for the sake of God Most High and who come together for that and separate for that, the person who remembers God Most High in private and whose eyes fill with tears, the man who when called by a magnificent and beautiful woman says to her: 'I fear God Most High,' and the man who gives voluntary charity with his right hand so that the left hand has no knowledge of it." And he said: "No one visits a brother for the sake of God Most High save that an angel cries out, saying: 'Be happy and blessed! Thine is the heaven of God Most High!'"

And he said: "A man was going to visit a friend. God Most High sent an angel in his path who asked: 'Where goest thou?' He replied: 'To visit such-and-such a brother.' (The angel) asked: 'Dost thou have some business with him?' He said: 'No.' (The angel) asked: 'Art thou related to him in some way?' He said: 'No.' (The angel) asked: 'Has he done something good for thee?' He answered: 'No.' (The angel) said: 'Then why art thou going to him?' He answered: 'I love him for the sake of God.' (The angel) said: 'Then, God Most High has sent me to thee to give thee the good news that God Most High loves thee because of thy love for him, and has made heaven an obligation for both of you yourselves.'" And the Messenger (S) said: "The strongest resort of faith is love and enmity for the sake of God Most High."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Alchemy, p. 324.

Al-Ghazzali describes relationships with others ranking them in degrees.

THE FIRST DEGREE is that thou lovest someone for some reason linked with him, but that motive is religious and for the sake of God Most High, as thou likest thy teacher because he teaches thee knowledge. That friendship is of a divine nature since thine aim for (acquiring) this knowledge is the Hereafter, not rank or wealth. If the object be the world, that friendship is not of that kind. If thou love thy student so that he learn from thee and may obtain the pleasure of God Most High through learning, (thou) obtainest the spiritual reward of teaching also. This is for the sake of God Most High. But if thou lovest (him) for the sake of dignity and retinue, it will not be of that kind. If a person gives voluntary charity and likes a person on the condition that he deliver that to the poor, or he invites some poor people and likes a person who prepares a good meal, then such friendship is for the sake of God. Indeed, if one likes someone and gives him bread and clothing to provide for him the leisure to worship (God), it is friendship for the sake of God, since his motive is the peace of mind for worship.

Many religious scholars and worshippers have had friendships with the rich and powerful for this reason. Both were counted as friends for the sake of God Most High. Moreover, if one loves his own wife because she keeps him from corruption and because of the bringing forth of children who will supplicate for him, such love is for the sake of God Most High and everything thou spendest for her is a voluntary charity. Indeed, if one loves his student for two reasons: one that he serves him and the other that he gives him the peace of mind to perform his worship, that part which is for worship is counted as love for the sake of God most High and there is spiritual reward for it.

THE SECOND DEGREE is greater. It is that one love a person for the sake of God without having any expectations from him. Instead, it is by reason of obedience to God and for the love of Him that one loves the other. Moreover, because he is a servant of God and created by Him—such friendship is divine. It is greater, because this arises from the excess of one's love for God Most High, so much so that it reaches the boundaries of passionate love. Whoever is in love with someone, loves (that person's) district and neighborhood. He loves the walls of (that person's) house. Indeed, he loves the dog roaming the quarter's streets, and he likes that dog more than other (dogs). He is compelled to love the friend of his beloved, and beloved of his beloved, the people who obey the commands of his beloved, (the beloved's) servants, slaves, or

relatives; all of these he loves out of necessity, for his love spreads to whatever has a relation with his beloved. As his love increases, so it increases with the others who follow and are connected with the beloved.<sup>25</sup>

*ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE SELF AND OUR CREATOR-GUIDE*

This relationship is established, according to al-Ghazzali, through the commands of worship (*'ibādah*), which are the most fundamental means of communication between our “self” and God. They embody the same three aspects: knowledge (cognition), states (affect, process) and action (behavior). One who submits to the Will of God seeks knowledge of particular guidance. This produces a “state” (emotion) in the self which then responds with an action as al-Ghazzali explains:

Know that the object and core of all acts of worship are the remembrance of God Most High; that the buttress of Islam is obligatory formal prayer, the object of which is the remembrance of God Most High. As He said: *Surely (formal) prayer prevents lewdness and evil, and indeed the remembrance of God is greater (than all else).* (Q. 29:45)

Reading the Quran is the most meritorious of the acts of worship, for the reason that it is the word of God Most High. (Reading it) is remembering Him. All (things) in it—all cause a renewal of the remembrance of God, may He be praised and exalted. The object of fasting is the reduction of the carnal appetite so that the soul, liberated from the annoyance of the carnal appetites, may become purified and the abode of remembrance. For, when the soul is filled with carnal appetite, it is not possible to remember (Him); nor does (the remembrance) affect one. The object of the Greater Pilgrimage, which is a visit to the House of God, is the remembrance of the Lord of that House and the incitement of the longing for meeting Him.

Thus, the inner secret and the core of all of the acts of worship are remembrance. Indeed, the basis of Islam is the declaration: *There is no god but God.* This is the source of remembrance. All other acts of worship stress this remembrance. God’s remembrance of thee is the fruit of thy remembrance of Him. What fruit could be greater than this? For this He said: *So remember Me, I shall remember you.* (Q. 2:152)

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<sup>25</sup> Alchemy, pp. 325-6.

This remembrance must be continuous. If it is not continuous, it should be most of the time, for salvation is tied to it. For this, He said: *And remember God much; perhaps ye will be successful.* (Q. 62:10) He says that if ye have the hope of salvation, the key to that is much remembrance, not a little, and more frequently, not less.

And for this He said: *Those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying down...* (Q. 3:191) He praised these people because they do not neglect (remembrance) standing, sitting, lying down, or in any condition. And He said: *Remember thy Lord, (O Muhammad), within thyself humbly and with awe, in a soft voice, in the morning and in the evening, and be not of the neglectful.* (Q. 7:205) He said: "Remember Him with weeping, fear, and in concealment, morning and evening, and do not neglect (this) at any time."

The Messenger (S) was asked: "What is the best of acts?" He answered: "That thou die with thy tongue moist with the remembrance of God Most High." And he said: "Should I not inform you of the best of your actions—the most acceptable to the King, may He be exalted—and your highest degrees, that which is better than giving alms of silver and gold, and better than shedding your blood in battle against enemies in defense of the faith?" They asked: "What is that, O Messenger of God?" He said: "*The remembrance of God.*" The remembrance of God Most High! And, he said: "Whomever the remembrance of me engages in the worshipful supplication of God, his gift is, in my opinion, greater and better than giving (alms) to beggars." And he said: "The rememberer of God Most High among the heedless is like a living person amongst the dead, or like a green tree amongst dead vegetation, or like the warrior for the faith who stands fighting amongst those fleeing..."<sup>26</sup> In summary, the strength of one's love for God Most High is in accordance with the strength of one's faith. The stronger one's faith, the more overwhelming one's love is..<sup>27</sup>

#### *KNOW YOUR "SELF"*

The most important relationship for the purposes of traditional psychology is that of our relationship to our "self." Our "self" as we have seen, consists of body, spirit, soul and spiritual heart. We turn now to the Alchemy's Prolegomena (added here by al-Ghazzali, it does not appear in the Revival) where al-Ghazzali explores how to come to know the "self" in great detail.

<sup>26</sup> Alchemy, pp. 208-9.

<sup>27</sup> Alchemy, p. 326.

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The traditional method of teaching a text is for the teacher to read it part by part with a class of students and then comment on what the text is saying. This is the method used next taking just the first subsection of Topic One of the Prolegomena, "Know Thyself" which appears in the following paragraphs in bold. The commentary and explanations that follow are enhanced with other sections of al-Ghazzali's writings in the *Alchemy* which are inset for clarity. If we were sitting in al-Ghazzali's classroom, this is the method he would be using.

## COMMENTARY ON TOPIC ONE OF THE PROLEGOMENA: KNOW THYSELF

**1. Know that the key to the knowledge of God, may He be honored and glorified, is knowledge of one's own self.** For this it has been said: He who knows his "self" knows his Lord. And it is for this that the Creator Most High said: *We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves, so that it will become evident to them that it is the Truth.* (Q. 41:53) He said: We show them Our signs in the universe and in (their) selves so that the true nature of the Truth may become revealed to them.

Al-Ghazzali begins with the famous Tradition (*hadith*), "He who knows himself, knows his Lord." There is another that could be added: "Words of wisdom (knowledge) are the lost objects of the faithful; he must claim them wherever he finds them." The quest for knowledge is a religious obligation in Islam. Al-Ghazzali quotes another Tradition of the Prophet: Know that the Prophet (S) spoke thus: 'The quest for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim.' Seeking knowledge is a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Ghazzali continues to show that knowledge differs depending upon one's intentions.

All of the scholars have disputed (about the meaning of his words): "What knowledge is this (to which the Prophet referred)?" The scholastic theologians say that it is the science of scholastic theology by which the spiritual knowledge of God Most Might is obtained. The religious jurisprudents say that it is the knowledge of religious jurisprudence by which the lawful and unlawful are distinguished. The Traditionists say that is the study of the Traditions and the Practice (of the Prophet), which are the sources of the religious studies. The mystics say that is the knowledge of the states of the soul, for the way of the servant (of God) to God is through his soul.

Each of these groups exalts its own knowledge. Our view is that one particular knowledge is not meant (by the Prophet's words) and that neither are all of these studies required...<sup>29</sup>

Gnosis is defined as being continuously in the Divine Presence or sacred knowledge by al-Ghazzali:

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<sup>28</sup> Alchemy, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Alchemy, p. 104.

So, from all of this, it has become known that learning is a religious duty imposed upon all Muslims. No Muslim does not stand in need of some kind of knowledge, but such (necessary) knowledge is not of one kind. The obligations upon a person vary. Indeed, they change with conditions and times. However, there is no one without some kind of a need for knowledge. It is for this that the Prophet (S) said: "There is no Muslim for whom the seeking of knowledge is not a religious duty." That is, the search for the knowledge which he needs in his affairs.<sup>30</sup>

In regard to knowledge of the states of the heart, al-Ghazzali views this as the highest form of knowledge. A knower (gnostic, mystic) seeks: "...knowledge known as gnosis." Gnosis, *ma'rifat*, *'irfān*, a word we will meet often throughout al-Ghazzali's Alchemy of Happiness is knowledge of God that is actually experienced by the seeker. How does one obtain it?

Al-Ghazzali states it succinctly: "The beginning of all gnoses (*ma'rifat-hā*) is that one come to know oneself and God Most High." And then, he explains gnosis in more detail:

Know that the first station of the stations of religion is certainty and spiritual insight. Then, fear arises from spiritual insight, and from fear asceticism, patience, and repentance arise. Truth, sincerity, care in the remembrance (of God), and continuous meditation appear from fear, and from them familiarity and love arise. And this is the end of the stations. Satisfaction, commitment, and zeal; all of these follow upon love. As a consequence, the alchemy of (spiritual) happiness, after certainty and spiritual knowledge, is fear. Whatever is after that cannot be managed without it....<sup>31</sup>

And know that the divisions of the kinds of spiritual knowledge of faith are many:

The first is sanctification, that thou know that God, may He be honored and exalted, is pure and free of all attributes of created things and all that comes to thought and imagination. The expression of this is: "*Glory be to God!*" The second is that thou know that He is in this purity unique and He has no partner. The expression of this is: "*There is no god but God!*" The third is that thou know that everything that exists, all of it, is from Him and is His blessing. The expression of this condition is: "*Praise be to God!*" This is beyond both of the other two because both kinds of those kinds of spiritual knowledge appear beneath it. It was for this

<sup>30</sup> Alchemy, p. 107.

<sup>31</sup> Alchemy, p. 763.

that the Messenger (S) said: “*Glory be to God!*” is ten good deeds, “*There is no god but God!*” is twenty good deeds, and ‘*Praise be to God!*’ is thirty good deeds.” Those good deeds are not the movements of the tongue with those words. Rather, those good deeds are the spiritual insights appearing in the soul that those words express. This is the meaning of the knowledge of gratitude.

As for the state of gratitude, it is the joy that appears in the soul from this spiritual knowledge. For everyone who sees a blessing from someone rejoices in that.<sup>32</sup>

Included in the knowledge that we need for traditional psychology is knowledge of Divine Grace (the harmony, agreement, or concord of our will and action with God’s Will) and Guidance. As an exponent of traditional psychology—which has its basis in metaphysics—al-Ghazzali emphasizes the need to seek Divine Grace and Guidance in undertaking the greater struggle. It is his view that Divine Grace is always present whether we seek it or not but consciously seeking it increases the chances of success in this world and the next.<sup>33</sup>

As al-Ghazzali points out, Divine Guidance—which operates through “nature in its mode of operation” or process—has established Signs between the Creator and our “self” as a means of communication. We (God the Creator) shall show them (human beings) Our Signs upon the horizon (universe) and within themselves (the self) until it is clear to them (human beings) that He (God) is the Real (*Haqq*).” (41:53) When we become conscious of our “self” and then freely choose to learn to read and to live by the Signs without and within, we will have submitted to God’s Will (*islām*). We will have completed the process of perfecting nature’s process or “mode of operation” within us. We will become centered and balanced, exhibiting the noble character traits, having gained experiential knowledge (gnosis) of the oneness of God (monotheism, *tawhīd*) reflected in nature and within our “self.”

Signs of God in nature—which includes all of the universe from the largest galaxy of stars and the planets to the smallest living organism on earth—are both external to us and internal. The study of the external Signs forms the subject of the various Natural Sciences the human being has developed to “understand” the Divine Creation like cosmology, astronomy, philosophy, biology, chemistry, and so forth as well as the science of revelation, gaining knowledge about the Quran where the 6000 some verses are each called a Sign (*āyah*).

The study of internal Signs is part of what is called practical philosophy (*hikmat-i ‘amalī*) and includes the sciences of ethics,

<sup>32</sup> Alchemy, pp. 723-4.

<sup>33</sup> Alchemy, p. 841.

economics (including home economics) and politics. What was known as the study of ethics is today called traditional psychology. The goal of traditional psychology—to develop noble character traits—is to become a moral and ethical person by disciplining our free will in a process called “the greater struggle” (*jihād al-akbar*). Traditional psychology for al-Ghazzali (and all traditionalists) begins by referring to the “place” of the human being in the universe.

### *THE COVENANT BETWEEN SELF AND GOD*

As the last creation of nature’s Creator, we human beings occupy a special place in nature because out of all of nature it is only within us that God breathes His Spirit. It is this infusion of the Divine Spirit which allows us to become conscious of “self,” an advantage no other aspect of nature has. Therefore, even though all of nature, the universe, and the cosmos are divinely created, only we have “consciousness of self.”

In the traditional perspective, this gift of consciousness was granted to our human spirit when we accepted the trust of the heavens and the earth. The Quran says: “*We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it, and the human being carried it.*” (33:72) The acceptance of the trust includes the covenant with the Lord (*Rabb*) as the Quran says, “*And when your Lord took the seed of the children of Adam from their loins,*” and [asked], “*Am I not your Lord?*” and they bore witness, “*Yea, we do bear witness . . .*” so that they not respond on the Day of Judgment by saying, “*We were unaware of this.*” (7:172)

Through this covenant, we human beings became the trustee or representative of God on earth and accepted the vice-regency of the universe. The rules and regulations for this position are spelled out in traditional psychology. We accepted not only the outward trust of nature and the universe, but the inner trust as well—to complete and perfect our human nature. God gives it to us perfect and complete and it is the nurturing process—how we are raised and the environment in which we grow—that takes us away from our innate nature.<sup>34</sup> The goal of traditional psychology to assume noble character traits is so that upon the

<sup>34</sup> The Islamic view of human nature differs from the view of many Christians. Muslims believe that God created the human being complete and perfect and it is the nurturing process that tries to change human nature. Muslims believe that Adam and Eve forgot God’s Command and were forgiven by God for their forgetfulness and expelled from Paradise. Many Christians, on the other hand, based on the teachings of Paul (not Jesus) believe that Eve sinned and caused Adam to sin by touching the forbidden fruit. They call this original sin. Because of this original sin, all human beings born from the time of Adam to the time of Jesus lived and died with this original sin. When Jesus died on the cross, Christian theology teaches he saved the human being from that original sin.

Return to God—from whence all things came—we will return as the vice-gerent (*khalifah*) of the outer world as well as of our inner “self.”

### *SEEKING DIVINE GRACE*

In order to carry out the duties of the trusteeship, Divine Grace is sought. It is always available if sought as the Sign says: *God turns to those who turn to Him.* (Q. 2:160) Al-Ghazzali goes so far as to say that without Divine Grace—which is always present whether invoked or not—there is no conscious communication between the Creator and the trustee. In other words, without consciousness of self, communication of the regulations of the trust remains indirect and preconscious or even, perhaps, unconscious. Al-Ghazzali defines Divine Grace as “the harmony, agreement, or concord of our will and action with God’s Will.”<sup>35</sup> It appears as a Sign, “*That is the Grace of God, a free gift which He gives to Whom He Wills,*” (Q. 5:54)<sup>36</sup> and consists of four stages: guidance from God (*hidāyah*), sound judgment (*rushd*), confirmation (*tasdīd*), and support (*ta’yid*). Guidance from God is of two types: universal guidance through nature (*takwīn* or *khalq*) and particular guidance through revelation (*tashrīc* or *khulq*).

The verse or Sign of the Quran, “[God] gave unto everything its nature and further gave it guidance,” (Q. 20:50) according to the traditional perspective, indicates God as the Creator and the Guide of all nature.

The first kind of guidance is *takwīnī* or primordial, universal guidance which all of nature receives, human or otherwise, as part of their *fitrat* or innate nature or natural disposition. This universal guidance regulates whatever is created in nature through a natural, unreflective process, to implementing God’s Will. Al-Ghazzali expands on this type of guidance by saying, “He guides the young bird to pick up seeds from the time of its hatching; He guides the bee to build its house in a hexagonal form . . .”<sup>37</sup>

Our human nature in the traditional perspective holds within itself all that came before it in creation, not in material terms, but in terms of “nature in its mode of operation,” which is part of universal guidance. Mineral, plant, animal, and human “souls” each contribute to a part of the development and perfection of “nature’s mode of operation.” Minerals contribute preservation of the forms of the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water and their properties of cold and dry, hot and wet, hot and dry, and cold and wet, respectively. The plant soul

<sup>35</sup> Ihya, IV, 2:2255. Al-Ghazzali defines Divine Grace as “the harmony, agreement, or concord of our will and action with God’s Will.”

<sup>36</sup> See also 3:73, 57:29, 3:272, 3:174, 48:8

<sup>37</sup> Alchemy, p. 856.

contributes the ability to assimilate food, to grow, and to reproduce and the animal soul contributes perception and motivation.

At the time of the conception of the human body, it was completed with what is known as the infusion of the Divine Spirit (Q. 15:29) "*I breathed into him of My Spirit.*" Out of this union of body and "spirit" or "breath" was born the "soul" which inclines downwards towards the body and the spiritual heart which inclines upwards towards the infused spirit or breath. These four aspects—body, spirit (or breath), soul and spiritual heart make up the human "self." As the last offspring of creation, we received the gift of consciousness as part of our natural disposition, a gift that we share only with the Creator because of the covenant we made with God and the acceptance of the trusteeship or vice-regency. This, then, is the world of creation guided by universal guidance.

The second type of guidance refers to guidance acquired through God's commands. The world of command is guided by the particular guidance of revelation. As it is rational in orientation, it is our special guidance alone as human beings. If accepted as guidance in the perspective of "submission to the Will of God" (*islām*), particular guidance becomes yet another gift to one who actually does "submit to the Will of God" (*muslim*). It is a particular kind of guidance, in a sense, because it speaks to human consciousness. It is to elucidate this kind of guidance that God sends Prophets and the Divine Law as reinforcement against the forgetful and negligent human beings declaring on the Day of Judgment, "*We were unaware of this.*" (Q. 7:173)

Guidance acquired through revelation as a stage of Divine Grace or Assistance is considered to be a free gift from God because the giving was not obligatory on His part. However, al-Ghazzali makes an important distinction here. God's communication through revelation, by which we can acquire guidance, helps us know the positive traits of our divinely bestowed natural disposition, but does not compel us to actualize them through our actions or practices. We are free to make the choice to follow the world of command—particular guidance through revelation (*tashrīc* or *khulq*)—or not to do so. If we do not choose to be guided by particular guidance that is our choice. However, we will still be guided by universal (*takwīnī* or *khalq*) guidance just as the rest of nature is. We are compelled by universal guidance while we have free will in regard to choose or not choose particular guidance.

While we do not want to digress from our main point, there may be a need to further explain universal guidance. According to traditional psychology, the human being was born with a body infused with God's Spirit. These two, when joined, brought the soul into being. The body was created out of water and earth (cold and wet, cold and dry) while the spirit was created out of air and fire or light (hot and wet, hot and dry).

The soul contains all four properties—water, earth, air and fire—and their properties of cold, hot, wet and dry.

These properties or qualities join in various proportions to create the mineral soul which preserves them. Out of that grows the plant soul which gives us the ability to digest and assimilate food, to grow and to reproduce. Out of the mineral and plant souls comes the animal soul, which gives us perception and motivation.

All of these abilities —the ability to grow, to reproduce, etc.—belong to the world of creation and fall under universal guidance. They involve involuntary processes which do not require consciousness to function. They are natural processes.

However, as human beings who have consciousness, if we rely solely on universal guidance, we will not succeed in “submitting to the Will of God” (*islām*) and completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation because without particular guidance, there is the possibility that we will not be able to sufficiently strengthen our free will to oppose the satanic forces (ego) within us. Divine Grace, as Guidance from God, strengthens our will power so that we gain greater conformity to God’s Will. Without Divine Grace, we make choices whereby our mineral, plant, and animal nature are strengthened as opposed to our free will being guided to follow the advice of reason. In other words, without the guidance of the Prophets and the Divine Law—which are part of revelation—we will live by universal guidance alone, possibly never achieving our full potential and possibly never completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation which God so Willed when He infused His Spirit into us.

Particular guidance (*tashrīc*, *khulq*) enhances our natural disposition of conscience and our power of discernment to know the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, or positive virtues and negative vices. It also helps us regulate the states of our “self” at every level of change and transformation towards completing the perfection of nature’s process at its highest level. Al-Ghazzali refers to the Signs, “*But to those who follow guidance (tashrīc), He increases their guidance and bestows on them piety.*” (Q. 47:17) Say: *God’s guidance is the guidance* (Q. 6:71) *Whenever God wills to guide a human being, He enlarges his breast for surrender (to Him)* (*islām*). (Q. 6:125)

In addition to Guidance from God in both its universal and particular forms, Divine Grace contains three other previously alluded to stages—sound judgment, confirmation and support—to all people in proportion to their seeking Divine Grace. The Sign, “*And We verily gave Abraham of old sound judgment and were aware of him,*” (Q. 21:51) confirms the second stage of Divine Grace—sound judgment—which is present when we sense God is aware of us. The Sign that we have received confirmation of Divine Grace is when we are aware that our

will and what we intend have resulted in an action that is directed to God. This is the third stage referred to by al-Ghazzali as confirmation (*tasdīd*). The final stage of Divine Grace is support (*ta'yīd*) which is referred to by the Sign, "...when I supported you with the Spirit." (5:110) The Sign that we have received support of Divine Grace is when we become aware that we have developed greater insight.

Al-Ghazzali elaborates on Divine Grace:

There is no blessing without its divine grace. The meaning of divine grace is the setting up of a concordance between the decree of God Most High and the desire of the servant of God. It is both in evil and in good. However, the term has customarily come to refer to the joining of the desire of the servant of God and the (divine) decree in which lies the servant's well-being. This is fulfilled with four things:

**THE FIRST IS GUIDANCE** of which no one is not in need, for if a person is seeking the happiness of the Hereafter and if he does not know the way, but knows the wrong way, what is the profit? Therefore, the creation of things without guidance is not enough. For this, God Most High put (us) under an obligation for both, saying: [(Moses) said: Our Lord] is He Who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright; (Q. 20:50) and He said: (God) is He Who measures, then guides. (Q. 87:3) And know that there are three degrees of guidance:

**THE FIRST (DEGREE)** is that one distinguish between good and evil. He has given this to all rational beings: some (distinctions are made) by the faculty of the reason and some by the words of the prophets, by that which He said: *And guide him to the parting of the mountain ways?* (Q. 90:10) He desired to show the way of good and evil to (the Messenger). And by that which He said: *(The Thamud) preferred blindness to the guidance,* (Q. 41:17) He meant that whoever is deprived of this guidance, either by reason of envy or pride, or because of worldly affairs, does not heed the prophets or the religious scholars. If (that were) not so, no rational person would be incapable of this.

**THE SECOND DEGREE** is the special guidance that appears little by little between religious conduct and striving, and opens the way to the underlying purpose. This is the fruit of striving. As He said: *As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths.* (Q. 79:69) He said that when one strives, We Ourselves shall guide him to the way. He did not say: "We Ourselves shall guide (him) to Us." And that which He said is also this: *And as for those who walk aright, He adds to their guidance...* (Q. 41:17)

**THE THIRD DEGREE** is the guidance reserved for the select. This light appears in the world of prophethood and

sainthood. This guidance is to God Most High, not to the way of God. This is in a manner for which the intellect does not have the strength, for it comes of itself to (him). That which He said: *Say: Lo! The guidance of God is the Guidance!* (Q. 6:71) means that it is absolute guidance (*par excellence*). He called it "Revival" and said: *Is he who is dead and We have raised him unto life and set for him a light wherein he walks among men as him whose similitude is in utter darkness?* (Q. 6:122)

As for rectitude, it is that the impulse to travel the way with guidance appear in one. As He said: *And We gave Abraham his rectitude.* (Q. 21:51) A child who has reached puberty is not called rightly guided if he knows how property is preserved and does not do so, even though he has received guidance.

As for finding guidance, it is that the motion of one's limbs move with ease from the aspect of that which is right so that one may quickly attain his goal. So, the fruit of guidance is in spiritual knowledge, the fruit of rectitude is motive and desire, and the fruit of finding guidance is in the power and tools of movement.

As for support, it is composed of the help of the angels from the unseen internally with the sharpness of perception, and externally with the power of strength and movement. As He said: *When I strengthened thee (Mary) with the Holy Spirit.* (Q. 5:110) Chastity is close to this. That is that an impediment appear inside one blocking the way to sin and the darkness of the way, but one does not fully understand where the impediment comes from. As He said: *And she certainly desired him, and he (Joseph) would have desired her if it had not been that he saw proof of his Lord.* (Q. 12:24)

These are the blessings of the world that are the provision for the Hereafter, and these have need of other causes, and these causes have need of other causes, until at the end (of the sequence) one reaches the Guide of the Perplexed and the Lord of Lords, Who is the Causer of Causes. A discussion of all the links in the chain of causes would be lengthy; let what we have said here suffice.”<sup>38</sup>

Based on al-Ghazzali's description, the Guidance we receive through sound judgment, confirmation and support will reflect in our intentions, which consist of desire, will power and knowledge. We use our will power to motivate us and make our intentions known to ourselves in establishing our relationship with God, with the creation and with our

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<sup>38</sup> Alchemy, pp. 738-9.

“self.” We do this, according to al-Ghazzali, through three stages: knowledge (cognition), states (affect), and acts (behavior).

Our cognition based in the certain belief in the Oneness of God and prophethood of Muhammad (S) results in our strategies reflecting that belief system. Our affect based in noble character traits exhibited in the Most Beautiful Names that formed the character of Prophet Muhammad (S) energize our total “self” (body, spirit or breath, soul and spiritual heart). This leads to healing and centering—to the extent of God’s Will and our motivation—in the complete and perfect human nature God gave us, holding fast to our covenant and maintaining our trusteeship of nature. Our behavior then becomes habituated to bonding with our Creator, the universe, friends, family and other human beings in such a way that we communicate with them through the most beautiful character by holding our passions—lust and anger—in check by our sense of reason while maintaining our reason to be balanced and centered in fairness and justice. This is how we exhibit our love of God which, according to al-Ghazzali, is the highest state we human beings can attain.

Adding to our various kinds of knowledge, in addition to knowledge about Divine Guidance and Grace, is the knowledge of intention. Al-Ghazzali explains:

Intention is composed of all three: of desire, of power, and of knowledge. Desire is what prompts it and sets it to work. That is also called motive, purpose, and intention. All three have one meaning.<sup>39</sup>

This is knowledge about how important making our intention known is according to traditional psychology because it is through our intentions that we will be judged in the Hereafter. We should also know as we are trying to get to know our “self” that the best intention we can have is to do whatever we do for God’s sake alone as al-Ghazzali points out:

Now that thou hast learned that the meaning of intention is motivation for action, know that there is the person whose motivation for devotion is the fear of hell. There is the person whose motivation is the blessings of Paradise. Whoever acts for the sake of Paradise is the slave of his belly and his genitalia and is killing himself so that he will fall in a place where he will satisfy his belly and his genitalia. And he who acts out of fear of hell is like the bad slave who does not work except out of fear of his master. Both of these have nothing to do with God Most High. On the contrary, the admirable servant of God is he who does what he does for the

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<sup>39</sup> Alchemy, p. 801.

sake of God Most High, not in the hope of Paradise, or in the fear of hell. He is like the person who looks upon his beloved for the sake of the beloved, not because his beloved gives him silver and gold; for whoever looks for the sake of silver and gold, his beloved is silver and gold. Consequently, whoever's beloved and adored one is not the beauty and majesty of the Divine Presence cannot form such an intention.<sup>40</sup>

**2. In a word, there is nothing closer to you than you. If you do not know yourself, how can you know anything else? Indeed, if you say you know your “self,” you are in grievous error! You know nothing more about your “self” than your head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and external skin! All you know about your insides is that when you are hungry you must eat; when you anger, you fight; when lust or (sexual) appetite overcomes you, you seek to copulate. In this, you are the equal of the beasts of burden!**

Our “self” consists of body, spirit, soul and spiritual heart as has been previously described. When al-Ghazzali refers to soul in the *Alchemy*, he is invariably referring to the animal soul (*nafs al-ammārah*). What is this animal soul and what purpose does it have?

It is important here to know the animal soul in great detail, as it is the animal soul that is our enemy in our greater struggle.

The word “soul” can be confusing in traditional psychology because necessary descriptions are often not given in traditional texts so the lines tend to blur particularly between the concepts of soul, spirit and

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<sup>40</sup> Alchemy, pp. 813-14. What al-Ghazzali is saying in this passage is: {that you know the intention} (reason, motivation, purpose) for not doing something that you are able to do but upon reflection do not do so it appears to be out of your control. Intention is a desire or impulse that causes one to act. You act according to your will power. “If you desire to, you do it; and if you do not desire to, you do not do it.” However, when the desire is not in your control (because of your belief system), you may still desire something or not desire something. Moreover, a desire may arise or not arise. The cause of a desire not arising—you are not motivated to do it—is when an erroneous belief system prevents you from doing it. Your motivation or intention is tied to something in this world or the next preventing you from desiring it. A person who does not know these mysteries defers many acts of devotion because there is no motivation to do them.

An example of what al-Ghazzali is referring to here would be: it is the time for formal obligatory prayer. A person believes that God will forgive them his sins or that there is no Hereafter or that missing an obligatory formal prayer is not anything to concern himself about because he knows many Muslims who do not pray, etc. All of these rationalizations, according to al-Ghazzali, form an erroneous belief system which then does not create the desire in a person to use their power to act and perform the formal obligatory prayer. As a result of not knowing the mysteries of worship one misses many acts of devotion. Their rationalizations prevent their being motivated to perform them.

heart. Here we will try to clarify what traditionist mean by soul in general and animal soul in particular.

We have previously referred to the mineral and plant souls as well as the animal soul. In addition, the Quran refers to the blaming soul and the soul at peace among others. According to al-Ghazzali, only the animal soul when seen within the human being plays a negative role in trying to prevent us from succeeding in the greater struggle. The other aspects—the blaming soul, the soul at peace, etc.—are positive aspects of the soul that are often referred to as the heart and the spirit respectively.

Here we will only be describing the animal soul.

The animal soul or “passions” in the traditional perspective consists of two major systems: affective (lust, appetite, preserve the species, attraction to pleasure) and behavioral (anger, preserve the individual, avoidance of harm/pain). We have met these two concepts previously as states (affect, emotion or A) and acts (behavior or B).

Al-Ghazzali explains the importance of the opposing cold-hot qualities between these two aspects of the animal soul:

And the reason for anything’s not coming into existence in perfection and beauty is that there is no place for its acceptance because there is some attribute working in opposition to it. It may be that in that opposition there is a purpose for some other work: for it is not possible for fire to accept the coolness and delicacy of water, because heat does not accept cold, as it is its opposite. Too, its heat is the point (of its existence). Eliminating (that quality) from it would also be a deficiency. In fact, the moisture from which He created the fly He created because the fly is more perfect than that moisture. The moisture is (potentially) capable of that perfection. (The realization of that potential) was not held back from it, for such a restriction would be stinting. (The fly) is more perfect because in it are life, power, sensation, movement, and strange shapes and organs that are not in that moisture.<sup>41</sup>

#### *THE EMOTIONAL OR AFFECTIVE SYSTEM*

The affective/emotive or “attraction to pleasure” system is the most basic aspect of the animal soul and its function is to preserve the human species. This aspect of the animal soul is referred to as *shahwat* (concupiscence) by al-Ghazzali. It has been translated as carnal desires, lust (appetites) or our bestial qualities. Lust is born of water and earth (cold and wet and cold and dry respectively) and has a downward

<sup>41</sup> Alchemy, p. 727.

tendency. It is that part of our “self” that seeks, desires, and is attracted to pleasure.

### *THE BEHAVIORAL SYSTEM*

The second system to be generated as part of the animal soul, is the behavioral or “avoidance of pain” system to preserve us as an individual. Al-Ghazzali refers to this as *ghadhab*, (irascible) anger, or our predatory qualities. Anger is born of fire and air and has an upward inclination. The behavioral system is considered to be in a preconscious state in the sense that it is capable of learning discipline and modifying itself if regulated by a balanced cognitive system which will be discussed below.

### *THE AFFECTIVE/EMOTIVE AND BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS (THE ANIMAL SOUL)*

Al-Ghazzali compares the animal soul (affect-behavior) to a stubborn animal and how to discipline it.

The similitude of this animal soul is the stubborn beast of burden which we satisfy by first withholding its fodder until it is tamed. Another is that we remove the fodder from before it so that it does not see it. Another is that we give it that amount which calms it down. Each of these three treatments is the same for the appetite. It is the weakening of the appetite.<sup>42</sup>

Al-Ghazzali gives another example of the animal soul.

The similitude of anger is that of a hunting dog, the similitude of the carnal appetite is that of a horse, and the similitude of reason is that of a rider. A horse is sometimes refractory and sometimes obedient and trained. A dog is sometimes taught and sometimes it reverts to its own nature. Until the one is taught and the other trained, there is no hope for the rider’s obtaining any game. Indeed, there is the fear that he will be killed, that the dog may attack him, or that the horse may throw him to the ground.<sup>43</sup>

The affective-behavioral systems or “the passions” are the irrational systems within our “self.” They can corrupt our rational system and seduce our free will. They work through both our internal sense of

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<sup>42</sup> Alchemy, p. 823.

<sup>43</sup> Alchemy, p. 452

imagination and through our impulses to move our “self” to attracting pleasure (lust) or avoiding harm (anger).

Our abilities to be motivated and to perceive arise out of our animal soul. When we desire something, our will power is motivated to obtain it. When we desire to escape from a dangerous situation, that desire motivates our will power to flee. So, while al-Ghazzali describes states (affect, attraction to pleasure, emotion lust) as separate from acts (behavior, avoidance of pain, anger) as the second and third of his fundamentals of traditional psychology, they are actually one thing—the animal soul. There is a continuous tension between them on the one hand trying to obtain pleasure while on the other trying to avoid harm.

According to traditional psychology, the affective or emotional system is programmed to instinctively attract love and pleasure while the behavioral system is programmed to avoid harm and pain. The affective system receives its energies from the organ of the liver through the veins to attract to pleasure. It is the most basic drive of human nature. The behavioral system, on the other hand, receives its energies from that of the heart through the arteries. That is, our tendencies to be attracted to pleasure pass through our veins while our tendencies to avoid pain pass through our arteries. The two together, therefore, act to “attract pleasure” and “avoid pain or harm.”

Traditionalists believe that our natural state is one of pleasure, whether it be in attracting pleasures or in protecting the pleasure system through the avoiding of harm/pain (preserving the individual). If the affective dominates, we are attracted to all sorts of pleasures. If the behavioral system dominates, we are ruled by the urge for power and ambition. This becomes clear in the words of al-Ghazzali:

Know that however much the appetite is stronger, the spiritual reward for opposing it is that much greater. There is no appetite stronger than this, but the desideratum of this appetite is unseemly. Most of those who do not give rein to this appetite are either unable to, or do not do so out of shame and the fear of disclosure and the ruin of their reputations. There is no spiritual reward for those who abstain for these reasons, for their obedience is motivated by the world, not by the Religious Law. And, an inability to commit sins is a blessing, for one will indeed not fall liable to punishment and sin, whatever the reason for one’s abstinence. However, if a person masters this forbidden thing without any obstacle, and he abstains for the sake of God, his spiritual reward is great. He is one of the seven persons who shall be under the shade of the Throne of God Most High on the Day of Resurrection. His degree will be the degree of Joseph (A) in that meaning.

Joseph (A) was the imam and leader in negotiating this dangerous passage.<sup>44</sup>

These two systems cooperate in such a way that the actions of the behavioral system unite with or replace those of affect whenever we are in difficulty. When we sense an object to be desirable, affection responds, and from this, in turn, we are motivated because of our desire to possess it. If the object can easily be procured, the affective/atraction to pleasure system supplies sufficient energy—i.e. we are hungry, have food and eat. However, if any obstacles get in the way—i.e., we have no food—the behavioral/avoidance of pain system yields hope in support of the affective system by our action of going to the store to get food, enabling us to strive with greater effort to get the pleasure that we want. Our “attraction to pleasure” power may deprive us of contentment until the obstacle has been removed and our desire satisfied (i.e. we have satisfied our hunger). However, whenever there is an insurmountable problem—i.e. we have no money to buy food—our affective system is overwhelmed with loss of hope so that we do not spend energy in vain.

The same is true with regard to avoidance of pain. Courage leads us to combat that which oppresses us—i.e. we go to war—but fear prevents our persisting against great odds—we submit when overwhelmed. Whenever difficulty afflicts us, our behavioral system supports our emotions or affective system.

The result is far more dangerous to our balance than when our emotional or our behavioral systems each act alone. The behavioral system may induce us to pursue that which is contrary to the affective system. It may risk our very life to seek revenge or to be envious. Thus the very means which nature—in its mode of operation—provided to insure the survival of the individual may prove its undoing. The two systems, acting together, can fan into a flame that destroys rationality.

The affective-behavioral systems or animal soul may proceed from a mild state to an extreme one. Desire of a future good may kindle either hope (a mild state) or despair (an extreme state). The resentment of a future event stirs either fear (an extreme state) or courage (a moderate state depending upon the circumstances). The perception of a present evil, which at first caused grief, may incite anger. The progress between emotion and behavior is frequently from grief to anger.

If these two systems dominate, they blind our sense of understanding. They can cause our sense of reason to judge whatever promotes their needs as good and agreeable to reason. The domination of our animal soul (emotion-behavior) can be so strong that our energies are

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<sup>44</sup> Alchemy, p. 492.

exhausted and their perception, then, prevents us from returning to a normal state.

#### *THE COGNITIVE SYSTEM/*

Animals also have the animal soul and if we as human beings do not proceed beyond this, we would just be another of the animal species according to al-Ghazzali. We would be either bestial (attraction to pleasure, appetite or lust) or predatory (avoidance of pain, anger). The difference lies in the third system within us—the cognitive system. Al-Ghazzali refers to the positive aspect of cognition, thinking or gaining knowledge as angelic and the negative as satanic. Our cognitive system is the center where our knowledge is stored and out of which our actions should initiate after reflection.

Al-Ghazzali tells us that the animal soul was created earlier than our spiritual heart and took over the breast when we were children.

First, carnal appetite, which is the tool of Satan, was put in control over him. That intelligence which is the enemy of passion and is the light of the essence of the angels was created after the establishment of the carnal appetite (in him) and its seizing the fortress of the breast in conquest. The self became accustomed to and familiar with it.<sup>45</sup>

Other characteristics of affective or emotional-behavioral response to a situation include contradiction and contrariety. Contradiction and contrariety have to do with our ability to reason. When we least expect it, the two systems may completely undermine our rationality. While we are engaged in thought, an emotion or motion so strong may creep into us that we are carried beyond all control. We have to respond even if it means losing our life. The desires of these systems (the animal soul) keep neither order nor measure because of the inability of the animal soul to reflect.

The cognitive system is actualized through nurture. Its final form depends upon the quality and quantity of the environment in which we grow and develop. If our nurturing process is a psychically healthy one, we will actualize our natural disposition for discerning between positive and negative dispositions, good and bad, right and wrong, possible and impossible. This is done through particular guidance in the form of Divine Grace of which we may or may not be aware.

If our nurturing process has been a psychically unhealthy one—in the sense that we were brought up without being taught how to reason—we will lead our “self” astray. In terms of free will actions, an

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<sup>45</sup> Alchemy, p. 688.

underdevelopment of reason is called a state of preconsciousness, that is, not being present in consciousness, but capable of being “reminded” of it without encountering any resistance or repression, “knowing that you do not know.” An undevelopment of reason, a negative trait which is known as the most fatal kind in terms of morality, is unconsciousness. Alienated from self-awareness, unconscious impulses are naturally disposed to be stronger to preserve the human race and the individual when there is no possibility of consciousness (exercise of reason). It is not knowing and not knowing that we do not know. When there is an overdevelopment of reason, hypocrisy, cleverness and identity disturbances take over the self.

Al-Ghazzali frequently warns of the dangers of hypocrisy:

Another thing is that one must watch one's soul, as the appetite of hypocrisy commonly lies hidden inside one. On the pretext of others' following his example, he makes (his acts of devotion) public until he is ruined. This weak one is like the person who does not know how to swim and is about to drown. He seizes the hand of another and both perish.<sup>46</sup>

If guidance comes at a later life stage, we will then make the attempt to implement God's Will and perfect our God-given nature. Al-Ghazzali describes the gradual process to restoring the healthy psychic self:

...he is made habituated to opposing the appetite little by little until he becomes bold, for when a person desires to become strong, he must test his strength and perform acts of strength. Little by little and bit by bit, he goes farther. A person who wants to wrestle with a strong man must first wrestle with persons who are weaker and test his strength with them to increase (his own) strength. It is for this that the strength of people who do hard work is greater. The treatment for obtaining patience in all affairs is this.<sup>47</sup>

It is then that we will have attained what al-Ghazzali's refers to as the angelic state. This is a process known as “restoration of psychic health.” If not, we will live out our life in a state of unconsciousness, unaware of our true potential, never completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation.

The animal soul becomes accustomed to comfort and ease al-Ghazzali tells us:

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<sup>46</sup> Alchemy, p. 626.

<sup>47</sup> Alchemy, p. 720.

Another reason is that when the self becomes accustomed to comfort and ease, it acquires a love for the permitted things of the world and the soul becomes attached to them, turning the world into its heaven. Death becomes difficult. Insolence and heedlessness appear in one's soul. When one engages in the remembrance (of God) and secret conversation (with God), one finds no pleasure in it. Since lawful passions keep him from this, he becomes discomfited and troubled. The world becomes hateful to him and an eagerness for the comfort of the Hereafter appears in (his soul). In a state of sorrow and broken-heartedness, a single glorification will have the effect upon his soul that hundreds (of glorifications) did not have when he was in a state of joy and ease.<sup>48</sup>

As a result, the spiritual heart has to be "weaned" from reliance upon the animal soul al-Ghazzali says:

The similitude of the animal soul is the falcon that is trained by putting it into a chamber and covering its eyes so as to restrain from all that was in it of its falcon-ness. Then, gradually, it will be given meat so that it may become familiar with the falconer and obedient to him. In the same way, the heart does not find intimacy with God Most High so long as you do not wean it from all habits and do not close off the eyes, tongue, and eyes (to such things), and you do not discipline it with seclusion, hunger, silence, and sleeplessness. In the beginning, this will be difficult for it—just as when a child is weaned from milk. Afterwards, (the child) will become such that if one tries to give him milk by force, he will not be able to drink it.<sup>49</sup>

Bearing hunger by choice—not by necessity—according to al-Ghazzali is one of the best ways to learn to control the animal soul.

Know that the object of hunger is the breaking of the self, bringing it under control, and correcting it. When it is upright, these measures are not necessary. It is for this reason that while the spiritual guide commands all of this for the disciple, he himself does not do it. The object is not pain and hunger. Rather, the object is that one eat that amount which neither makes his stomach heavy nor leaves the feeling of hunger. Both of these distract one from worship. The perfection in this lies in partaking of the attributes of the angels: they experience neither the pain of hunger nor the

<sup>48</sup> Alchemy, p. 464.

<sup>49</sup> Alchemy, p. 464.

heaviness of repletion with food. However, the self does not obtain this balance except by applying force to it in the beginning.<sup>50</sup>

If we succeed in becoming conscious and aware of the greater struggle, we will search for balance and equilibrium in the three systems of affect (emotion, lust, attraction to pleasure), behavior (anger, avoidance of pain), and reason according to al-Ghazzali.

Now thou must learn that nothing is pleasant or unpleasant to thee so long as thou art first not aware of it. Being aware of things is the charge of the senses and the intellect. The senses are five, and for each one of these there is a pleasure, and because of that pleasure, one likes it; that is, (thy) nature inclines to it. The sensory pleasure of the eye is in beautiful forms and in greenery, flowing water, and the like. It necessarily loves them. The pleasure of the ears is in beautiful and rhythmic voices (and sounds). The pleasure of the nose is in sweet scents. The pleasure of the taste is in foods. The pleasure of touch is in soft touches. All of these are love; that is, (thy) nature has an inclination towards them, and animals have all of these, too.

The sixth sense is something in the soul that is called "reason," called "vision," called "light, or by whatever term thou wishest to utter. It is that which distinguishes a human being from beasts. It also has perceptions which are pleasant to it and which are dear to it, just as other pleasures are agreeable to the senses and dear to the senses. About this the Messenger (S) said: "Three things of the world have been made my friend: women, sweet scents, and my delight in formal prayer. He placed the highest degree on formal prayer. Whoever is bestial is unaware of the soul and knows naught but the senses. He will never believe that formal prayer is pleasing and that it may be loved. A person who is dominated by his intellect, and is more distant from the attributes of the beasts, prefers the observation with the inner eye of the beauty of the Divine Presence, the wonders of His handiwork, the perfection and majesty of His Essence and Attributes over the observations with the outer eye of fine forms and greenery and flowing water. Indeed, in his view, all of these become lowly after the beauty of the Divine presence has been revealed to him.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Alchemy, p. 488.

<sup>51</sup> Alchemy, pp. 899-900.

**3. Therefore, you must seek out the truth about yourself: What sort of a thing are you? Where did you come from? Where are you going? Why have you come to this stopping place? For what purpose were you created? What is your happiness and in what does it lie? What is your misery and in what does that lie?**

**What sort of a thing are you?** al-Ghazzali asks. Throughout the *Alchemy*, he cautions about being arrogant.

The point of this is that thou shouldst not call thyself one of the chosen of the Divine Presence so that thou measure everything according to thyself and thou say about that in which there is no benefit (for thee): "Why was this created? There is no purpose in it!" When thou hast understood that the ant was not created for thee, know that the moon, the sun, the stars, the heavens, and the angels, all of these also were not created for thee, even though thou hast some benefit from them; just as the fly was not created for thee, even though thou have some benefit from it. For, it has been chosen to eat all that is unpleasant to thee and would putrefy, in order to lessen the unpleasant stench. The butcher was not created for the fly, even though there is a benefit from him for the fly. Thy supposition that the sun rises for thy sake every day is like the supposition of the fly that imagines that the butcher goes to his shop every day for its sake so that it will be able to eat its fill of blood and unpleasantnesses. Just as a butcher himself turns to other work so that he does not remember the fly, even though the leavings of his work is the life and sustenance of the fly, the sun is turned to the service of the Divine Presence in its circumambulations and movements and does not remember thee, even though the leavings of its light enable thine eyes to see and the earth is tempered by the leavings of its temperament so that the plants which are thy food may grow. Therefore, there is for us in the purpose of creation that which has no connection with thee...<sup>52</sup>

We are in one sense a series of powers or abilities as al-Ghazzali describes us:

Know that powers have been created in the human being: each one created for a purpose and in consistency with his nature. Its pleasure is consistent with his nature, just as the power of anger has been created for dominance and revenge and one's pleasure is in (doing) that. The power of the carnal appetite has been created for the obtaining of nourishment and

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<sup>52</sup> Alchemy, pp. 728-9.

one's pleasure is in (doing) that. Make an analogy of the faculties of hearing, sight, etc., in the same manner: each one has a pleasure and these pleasures are different. The pleasure of sexual intercourse is different from the pleasure of giving rein to one's anger. There are also differences in strength; some are stronger, as the pleasure of the eye from a fine image is more dominant than the pleasure of the nose in pleasant scents. A power has also been created in the human soul that is called "intelligence" and "illumination." It was created for the knowledge and spiritual insights that do not enter the imagination or the senses, and that is one's nature, too. One's pleasure in that is that by it one knows that this world has been created and it requires a wise and All-Powerful Planner Who always was. In the same way, one learns the attributes of the Maker and His wisdom in (His) creation.<sup>53</sup>

**Where did you come from?***OUR BODY CREATED FROM THE ELEMENTS*

The elements, in the traditional perspective, develop in the atmosphere between the moon and the earth. Once on earth, they are preserved in the mineral "soul" or nature in its mode of operation as the Will of God. The elements are earth, air, fire, and water. Earth is dry and cold, water is cold and moist, air is hot and moist, and fire is hot and dry. Earth is the opposite of air and water is the opposite of fire. Union is possible because water acts as an intermediary between earth and air and air acts as an intermediary between water and fire.

The elements possess the natural disposition to ascend, descend, and to move in a circular direction. Each element is joined by one of its qualities to that which is below it and above it—water to earth below it by coldness and water to air above by moisture; air to water below it by moisture and to fire above it by heat; fire to air below it by heat and to earth, towards which it inclines in a circular motion, by dryness; earth to water above it by coldness and to fire, which declines towards it, by dryness. The elements are continually produced one from the other and their energy is never lost. The movement of the elements produces the humors within which, in turn, one's natural temperament is determined.

Two other functions these qualities have are those of being active or passive. Heat and cold are active while moisture and dryness are passive. Heat and cold are considered active because sometimes they draw on moisture and sometimes on dryness. A correspondence also exists between fire and understanding, air and reason, water and imagination and earth and the external senses where the four qualities are

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<sup>53</sup> Alchemy, p. 908.

again repeated: fire is likened to sight, air to hearing, water to taste and smell and earth to feeling.

Animals and we human beings inherit the natural dispositions of the mineral and plant soul as nature in its mode of operation and two special natural dispositions of their own, namely, voluntary motivation and perception by organs.

Al-Ghazzali recommends that we meditate upon our self.

So, meditate upon thyself at first as to whence (thou camest). At first, He created thee from a droplet of fluid, and He made the first residence for that droplet the loins of thy father and the breast of thy mother. He made earth of thy mother's womb and He made a seed from thy father's spine. After that, He made the seed of thy creation. Then He appointed passion to the male and female so that the seed would be sown in the earth. Then, He made the menstrual blood irrigate that seed and created thee from a drop of semen and menstrual blood. First, some blood congeals, then it becomes flesh, that which is called the fetus. Then, He breathed life into it. Then, from that simple blood and liquid, He caused a multitude of things to appear in thee such as skin, flesh, veins, sinews, and bones. Then, from all of these, He gave form to thy limbs. He created a round head, two long arms and long legs and at the end of each, (limb) five branches. Then, on the exterior, He created eyes, ears, a mouth, a nose, a tongue and the other organs; and inside thee, the stomach, the kidneys, the liver, the spleen, the gall bladder, the bladder, and the plentiful intestines. Each one has its own shape and its own attribute, and has a different size. He divided each of these into several parts. Each finger has three joints, and each member is composed of flesh, skin, veins, fat, and bones. He created thine eyes—not larger in size than a walnut—in seven layers, each layer possessing a special quality. If one of them fails, the world becomes dark for thee. If we were to expound on the marvels of the eye alone, many pages would be blackened (with ink).

Then, look at thine own skeleton and how He created a hard and firm solid from a delicate and thin liquid. Every part of it has its own shape and size; some (bones) are round, some are long, some are broad, some are hollow, and some are solid, each one is mounted on the other. In the size, shape, and appearance of each, there is a wisdom; rather, there are many wisdoms. Then, He made the bones the pillars of the body and He built everything upon them. If (the skeleton) were one piece, thou wouldst not be able to bend thy spine. If it were scattered loosely about, thou wouldst not be able to hold thy spine straight or stand upon thy feet. Therefore, He created it in segments so that it could bend. Then He put it together and

wound sinews and veins on it and made it strong. Then, He made it like a single unit to stand erect when needed.

On each vertebra (of the spine), He brought out four projections like swellings and in the vertebra beneath it four depressions like hollows so that those projections would be seated in the hollows and stand firm. From the sides of the vertebrae, He brought out projections so that the sinews could be wound about them, to strengthen them, so that one rests upon another. He made thy whole skull of fifty-five pieces of bone and bound them together with fine seams so that if one part is damaged, the others will be sound and all will not be broken. He created teeth, some with broad crowns to grind food, and others with thin and sharp crowns to cut and break up food and (then) pass (the pieces) to the molars. Then, He created seven vertebrae for the neck with veins and sinews tightly wound about them and mounted the head upon them. He created the spine of twenty-four vertebrae and placed the neck on it. He inserted the broad ribs in these vertebrae, and the same for the other bones, the description of which would be lengthy. In sum, He created two hundred and forty-eight bones in thy body, each one with a special purpose so that thine affair would be correct and prepared. He created all of this out of that despicable fluid. If one of those bones were missing, thou wouldest be rendered helpless; if there were one more of them, thou wouldest (also) be helpless.<sup>54</sup>

### *PERCEPTION*

With the development of the animal soul, our sense of perception begins to operate to distinguish images from objects in reality. Perception as a function of animals consists of five external and internal sensible and psychic senses.

### *FIVE EXTERNAL SENSES*

The five external senses are the abilities to see, hear, taste, touch and smell. These external senses are each capable of a basic perception of things that are actually present to the external sense organs. Their perception, however, is based on a single kind of impression.

### *FIVE INTERNAL SENSES*

The five inner senses are the abilities to have common sense, imagination, representation, rational perception and memory.

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<sup>54</sup> Alchemy, pp. 851-2.

### COMMON SENSE

Common sense, the first internal sense, is the storehouse for all impressions from the outer world. It directly receives the contents of the five external senses. For instance, when an apple is perceived, through "common" sense, we distinguish the different states of the apple and realize that every part of the apple possesses taste, smell, color, warmth, or cold.

There are four functions connected to common sense: to receive an impression; to act on it as arbiter of reports from the five external senses; to transmit the results to a more inward sense; to reduce contrary images to a unity of perception thereby destroying false impressions which may arise from several impressions received at the same time from different senses. It is the most basic sense of internal perception. Second is the internal sense of retaining forms or representation. This comes into action after common sense has stopped. It stores and retains the forms received by common sense. Third is sensible/rational imagination.

Perception is of three types: sensible, psychic, and cognitive/rational. The sensible functions include external and internal senses. Psychic and cognitive perception can be processed, as well, through the internal senses alone.

Although common sense, representation, and sensible imagination are held in common by animals and us, there are differences because of the human capacity for rationality.

### REPRESENTATION

Representation receives images that have been received and sorted by the common sense. Its main function within the self is to continue the thought process, to recommend important forms to the deliberations of rational imagination and to store them in memory. It retains impressions longer than common sense does and tries them in balance.

### IMAGINATION

While being referred to as sensible imagination in animals, imagination forms the basis of psychical perception. Whereas sensible perception is particular, imagination is general and it culminates in cognitive or rational perception so that it is the intermediary between the sensible and the rational. It is active while we are both awake and asleep and is the cause of dreams. It can operate either out of the immediate experience of intuition or out of the deliberations of reason.

As soon as the rational sense makes distinctions of universal meanings and presents them to our sense of reason to look more closely into them through the insight of our ability to reason, our sense of reason

looks at them through the image which the imaginative sense represents. Our sense of reason or rational sense distinguishes whether the image is perfect or not perfect, common or not common. It thinks immediately of the intelligible meanings. This is the way that universal meanings are understood by artists and scientists. When the artist, for example, thinks about how to make an object, he presents the image of the particular article to his imagination and prepares his plan to make it. Similarly, when a scientist looks into the object of knowledge to know its nature and give its description, he presents its image to his imagination.

Imagination writes in memory impressions of things received by the five external senses as well as by reason in addition to things it composes itself. It is like a person who writes himself a note to remind himself of something, and later reads the note and mentally adds something from his mind at that moment to the note. Later imagination may return to the forms and activate them without the intervention of the external senses. In this case, it is activated by the affective or behavioral systems attracting us to pleasure or avoiding harm. It has also been noted that imagination is more likely to follow the senses than to follow reason. Once the senses are satiated, imagination is free to busy itself with other forms. Imagination is never idle. It often leads us to confusion.

It is quite possible for our imagination to oppose reason. Since it is closer to the external senses than it is to reason, it may allure us to the affective or behavioral systems to establish a coalition against reason. Rash judgments are strengthened in this way.

Imagination plays a crucial role in us. It develops ideals and is naturally disposed to pass those that are of sufficient magnitude onto reason for deliberation. It also communicates with the spiritual heart where the energy of the affective-behavioral systems or animal soul resides. It has to do with both thought and action. It receives sense impressions before it can respond. Imagination has considerable authority over our "self." Because of its freedom and its dual relation to reason and the affective-behavioral systems or animal soul, it exercises an important influence on conduct, which may not be to our best advantage in trying to center our "self" as it is considered that right conduct comes from reason.

#### **COGNITIVE/RATIONAL PERCEPTION**

The fourth internal sense marks cognitive or rational perception within us. Cognition may be achieved in two basic ways: first through discursive reasoning, deliberation, and drawing conclusions. This is referred to as reason or rationality. The second type of cognition is that of direct awareness or experience and is referred to as intuition, its extension being gnosis. With the latter, cognition is attained without learning or making an effort to acquire cognition.

Making up the fourth internal sense, intuition/reason can operate without any sensible impressions. As reason, this type of internal perception is inclined towards the deduction of sciences, crafts, and the perception of intelligibles. Just as sensible imagination contained the ability to perceive information from the external senses and motivate attraction to pleasure and avoidance of harm, so, also, reason has a perceptive ability and a motivational one. Its perceptive ability is that of deliberation and understanding. Its motivating force is that of will power.

These two—conscience and will power—are referred to as the practical intellect. As the final point in an act, the practical intellect receives and illuminates ideas that have come from our imagination. It also has a reflective power by which it examines its own actions and certain innate criteria that provide knowledge of universal and practical guidance. Because of these natural dispositions, we not only comprehend particular forms, but also are able to distinguish between positive and negative dispositions and ultimately to arrive at Divine Truth.

Reason is used when our intellect considers material things and understanding is used by which universal, spiritual truths are comprehended. When reason strives towards contemplation, it is called the cognitive intellect. When it seeks the positive and having found it goes forward to the will in order that we may follow the positive or flee from the negative, it is called the practical intellect which contains the Active Intellect within itself. It is also referred to as wisdom. From each of the functions a habit of life may develop—contemplative or active. The word active is used in regard to the practical intellect because it does not stop with the discovery of a positive or negative trait but goes forward with the will.

#### MEMORY AND/OR RECALL

The fifth sense is that of memory or recall. Natural dispositions are held in storage here which we only need to be reminded of to recall. It does not, however, hold the forms gathered by common sense and retained by the second internal sense.

#### *MOTIVATION*

In addition to perception, we also contain a motivational system as part of the animal soul. Motivation, including will power, renders us capable of action. Motivation is of two types: the first gives an impulse requiring a voluntary response and the second involuntarily causes the body to react on its own accord. When a pleasurable or painful image is imprinted on the internal sense called sensible imagination, it rouses us to movement. This impulsive arousal has two subdivisions.

As previously stated, these two naturally disposed, unconscious/preconscious functions within our animal soul make-up its two basic

systems. Known in philosophy as the concupiscent or attraction to pleasure and irascible or avoidance of pain, in psychological terms they are referred to as "attraction to pleasure" or "the pleasure principle" and "avoidance of pain" or "the pain principle." They are essentially the unconscious, affective/emotive and the preconscious, behavioral systems.

Our voluntary motivation contains, in addition to the properties of animal motivation, free will. It is the highest form of motivation in nature's mode of operation and is independent of conscience or reason. It may do as it pleases, our spiritual heart will be held responsible in the Hereafter for our intentions or motivations for the choices we make.

#### *OUR COGNITIVE SYSTEM*

The cognitive system is the control center for thought and actions of our conscience, free will, and ability to gain consciousness of our "self." The norm in traditional psychology is for the cognitive system to regulate the preconscious (not to the extent that it can come to know, but to the extent that it can be disciplined) behavioral and unconscious affective natural dispositions by keeping them in a state of equilibrium or moderation in terms of the Straight Path.

#### *THE INTELLECT*

##### **THE PRACTICAL INTELLECT**

We are also equipped through universal guidance with what is known as the practical intellect as part of the process of nature in its mode of operation.

Whenever we intend to create something, we first form an image of it in our practical intellect (conscience and free will), which transfers it to the internal sense of imagination. We then set the organs into motion to bring it into being. Our practical intellect understands and abstracts in imagination.

When our practical intellect operates out of the internal sense of imagination, it abstracts the image of the thing to be created according to a particular form or size. Self-motivation then moves the organs to create the object. Thus, it is the practical intellect which first creates the thing and not self-motivation of the organs. The self is naturally disposed to motivation but only does so in the Creative Act when the practical intellect causes the thing to be created to appear in the internal sense of imagination. Only after that does self-motivation cause the things to be created by the use of the organs.

The practical intellect, then, has two functions: to present to the internal sense of imagination the image of the thing to be created; and to have the thing come into being outside the self by motivating the organs of the body.

It is through our practical intellect that we love or hate, live in society, and have friends and positive dispositions. The practical intellect is the locus of the highest forms of perception and motivation. The highest form of nature in its mode of operation in the perceptive system within the self is the conscience, which is the source of the general principles upon which morality is based. The highest form of nature in its mode of operation in the voluntary motivational system is choice or free will. It receives sensible and cognitive stimuli from the external and internal senses. When the stimuli are purely sensible, they have been first passed from the senses to the attraction to pleasure or avoidance of harm systems and from there to the practical intellect where a response is given. When the stimuli are purely cognitive, they pass directly into the practical intellect for action. When the stimuli are both sensible and cognitive, the practical intellect is the locus of operation for deliberation and the production of some action including human arts and sciences. The practical intellect contains the cognitive intellect and the latter develops through four stages.

### THE COGNITIVE INTELLECT

There are four stages in the acquiring of the cognitive intellect that is held in preparedness within the practical intellect. Each one is called an intellect. Once the practical intellect acquires these intellects by completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation within the self, that is, when the self is centered, the practical intellect then operates through the Active Intellect. The four stages are: potential, habitual, Active, and acquired intellects.

At the first stage of the potential intellect, the self thinks nothing but is prepared to think. Here the intellect cannot be creative in the act of knowledge. It is simply receptive to it. If there is actual knowledge at this stage, we will not understand the reality of it. Out of this, through "reminders" grows the habitual intellect. Here the possibility of actualizing the potential intellect's preparedness exists. This means knowing the principles or axioms of knowledge, like the whole, is greater than the sum of its parts. The Active Intellect is the stage when we no longer need a physical form. It is solely concerned with intellectual demonstrations and is either acquired or bestowed as a Divine Gift. The Active Intellect, the center of all forms of thought, has a natural disposition by which it can reflect and then perform the act of thinking. It also has a reflective power by which it examines its own actions and certain criteria of its natural disposition which provides knowledge of the law of God and nature. By virtue of these naturally disposed notions, we not only comprehend particular and material forms, but, also, as a result of several processes, distinguish between positive and negative traits and arrive ultimately at universal and Divine truths.

The Active Intellect operates through three stages: exercise of deliberation, exercise of conscience, drawing conclusions.

Finally, there is the acquired intellect, which is the highest stage of the intellects. These stages are like signs upon the way of centering of self and beyond. The traveler is always our "self." At the stage of the acquired intellect, every conceptual form potentially contained in us becomes apparent to us like the face of a person reflected in a mirror held before us.

Here acquisition ceases. All the forms exist in the cognitive intellect, held within the practical intellect, which is in a state where we can perform the act of thinking which occurs when the Active Intellect causes the habitual intellect to reflect back on itself and through this process, we begins to think about the forms we have.

The cognitive intellect, then, is concerned with the cognition of truth. The objects that this natural disposition deals with are necessary, universal, and unchangeable like mathematical properties. They can be contemplated, but not deliberated for there is only one truth. The cognitive intellect is the part of the perceptive system where forms are imprinted. If the form exists in matter, it abstracts them. If they are already abstract, it receives them. It is located within the practical intellect.

#### *THE PROCESS OF ACTIVATING THOUGHT/ACTION*

The process of thought in which action results, according to traditional psychology, can be described in the following way: when an object is perceived by the external senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling), nervous energy enables each organ affected to receive a particular kind of impression to which it has been naturally disposed to adapt. The impressions are sometimes vague and may be contradictory. Nervous energy hastens to the locus of common sense where the impressions of the external senses are reduced to a unity and stored in the internal sense of representation, which continues the thought process and gives the image to the internal sense of imagination.

This internal sense, having been able to elaborate ideas because of the nervous energy it has received, may assign the images to memory or may recommend them to reason and understanding before storing them for future use. If action is required, our imagination communicates to our spiritual heart informing it about the pleasure or pain of the object. At the same instant, the images or ideas, compounded by the imagination from their original, simple impressions, are abstracted and perceived by our sense of reason. Reason deliberates and draws a conclusion that it presents to our free will as positive or negative. Our free will, being the final decision maker, then decides to accept or reject the counsel of reason. The affective-behavioral systems (or animal soul) obey our free

will and set to work those things necessary for action. They command us to motion to attract the pleasure or avoid pain.

This is the procedure for thought/action when our cognitive system is in balance. If our nurturing process has not been oriented towards preserving a healthy moral self, reason's advice will not be accepted by our free will. Our free will may even be bypassed by the affective-behavioral systems and respond to imagination themselves, singularly or together, in commanding the self to action.

Our external-internal senses involved in sensible perception are naturally disposed to cooperate in such a way that each lower sense provides an image or stimulus adequate to the needs of the sense directly above it. Impressions received by the external senses become increasingly "abstracted" and "purified of the sensible," passing through our psychical perception of imagination until they culminate in the cognitive system's positive disposition of wisdom. Thus, our knowledge passes through several levels from the single sensible impression of each one of the external senses involved, through psychical perception, to the extent of spiritual truths. We then understand many things which are beyond impressions provided by the external senses, from which our spirit of self is moved just as the external senses are moved by external objects.

The knowledge that we receive from the external senses is like shadows of them. The knowledge we have from common sense, representation, and imagination is as if we looked upon the images with more clarity than their shadows. The knowledge we have of understanding is as if we viewed not only the shadows and clear images of things, but also their very presence. The knowledge we have by reason is as if in addition to the shadow, clear image, and presence of an object, we saw its effects as well so that the nature of the object as it really is may be known.

Perception, then, evolves ideas in various stages of completion. The degree of perception is accompanied by a corresponding degree of motivation. First is our perception from the external senses which our nervous energy presents to our organs to give us elementary knowledge of an object from which we receive a stimulus. This perception is limited. For instance, if an object perceived is too large, our sight needs the help of the internal senses. None of the external senses, without the help of imagination and memory, can build up impressions.

Next, come psychical impressions in our imagination which have no external form or abstract images of to understand to then will some response. Each of these may give rise to an attraction to pleasure or avoidance of pain response.

The structure of our "self" develops out of nature in its mode of operation in the mineral, plant, and animal. It shares the elements and their qualities with minerals; assimilative, reproductive, and growth

functions with the plant; and perception and motivation with animals. We begin to distinguish our "self" from the animal at the level of the third internal sense where we can employ free will to obey God's Will while the animal has no choice. It has to obey God's Will.

Out of our motivation comes our attraction to pleasure and avoidance of harm as well as our free will. Out of our perception, our conscience is illuminated. Our practical intellect evolves out of the combination of perception and motivation. Out of the practical intellect, the cognitive intellect develops. When our practical intellect is served by conscience, will power and understanding, it reflects on us through the presence of the Active Intellect and we become conscious of self. Our practical intellect is then called our Active Intellect. In order to be more certain that centering will be attained, al-Ghazzali says the natural way is for our Active Intellect to consciously make our will power choose that which is more difficult. This way we can be more assured that we are allowing the cognitive system to regulate. But even then, according to traditional psychology, the only way to be sure of being centered is through receiving Divine Grace (right guidance, confirmation and support).

The appearance of our Active Intellect marks the beginning of our greater struggle. Once centered, it is our Active Intellect operating out of the internal sense of imagination, by-passing reason and deliberation, that regulates us as we move as a spiraling center on the conscious return to the Source.

### **Where are you going?**

Al-Ghazzali says that we are going to either heaven or hell and describes our sojourn on earth as a business transaction.

So, the wise and the great ones of religion have realized that they have come into this world to engage in business, and the transactions are with the self. The profit or loss of these transactions is heaven and hell; rather, it is eternal happiness and misery. Therefore, one's self is put in the position of a business partner. Just as with a partner, conditions are made. Then, he is watched, and then he is audited. If he has been treacherous, he will be punished or reproved. So, (the wise and the saints), too, have stood with their selves in these six stations: fixing mutual conditions, vigilance, reckoning, punishment, striving, and reproof.<sup>55</sup>

### **Why are you here?**

Al-Ghazzali sees the reason for being here is to love God.

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<sup>55</sup> Alchemy, p. 825.

Know that love is valuable jewel. Claiming love is easy, so that a person may think that he is one of the lovers, but there are signs and proofs of love. One must seek the signs in oneself, and they are seven:

*THE FIRST (SIGN)* is that there is no loathing for death, for no friend dislikes the sight of the Friend. The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever loves the sight of God Most High, God Most High loves the sight of him, too." Buwayti said to one of the ascetics: "Dost thou love death?" The ascetic hesitated in replying. (Buwayti) said: "If thou wert truthful, thou wouldst love it." However, it is permissible that there be love and loathing at the hastening of death—but not at the principle of death—so that one who has not yet prepared his provisions (for the Hereafter) may make (them). The sign of this is that one is impatient in preparing the provisions.

*THE SECOND SIGN* is that one prefers that which is loved by God Most High to that which is loved by him. He does not neglect anything he knows may be the cause of his proximity to the Beloved. He avoids all that causes his distancing (himself) from that. This is a person who loves God Most High with all his soul. As the Messenger (S) said: "Say to whoever wishes to see a person who loves God with all his heart: 'Look at Salim, the client of Hudhayfah.'"

Moreover, if a person commits a sin, it does not follow that he is not a lover (of God). Instead, his love is not with his whole heart. The evidence of this is that Nu'ayman was punished several times for drinking wine. Someone cursed him in the presence of the Messenger (S). The Messenger (S) said: "Curse him not, for he loves God Most High and His Messenger." Fudayl said: "When thou art asked if thou lovest God, remain silent. If thou sayest 'no,' thou becomest an unbeliever. If thou sayest 'yes,' thy behavior does not resemble the acts of the lovers (of God)."

*THE THIRD SIGN* is that one always renews the remembrance of God Most High in one's soul and is eager to do that without taking pains; for whoever loves a thing remembers it frequently. If the love is complete, one never forgets (the object of love) itself. Yet, if one must force the heart to remember, it is feared that his beloved is that His remembrance dominate his soul. Consequently, it may be that the love for God Most High is not dominant, but the love for the love of Him dominates him who desires to love. Love is one thing and the love of love is another.

*THE FOURTH SIGN* is that one loves the Quran, which is His Word, and the Messenger, (S) and all that is established by Him. When the love has become strong, one loves all mankind, for all are His servants. Indeed, one loves all extant

things, for all are His creation, just as one who loves someone loves his composition and writing.

*THE FIFTH SIGN* is that one is avid for conversation (with God) in private and desirous for the coming of night. Crowds and hindrances depart and one holds conversation with the Friend in private. If one prefers sleep and idle chatter to solitude during the night and the day, one's love is weak. Revelation came to David (A): "O David, become the intimate of no one among mankind. No one is cut off from Me save two persons: one is he who hastens in the search for spiritual reward. When it comes late to him, he becomes languid. The other is he who forgets Me and is satisfied with his own condition. The sign of that is that I leave him alone and I keep him bewildered in the world."

Therefore, if love is total, affection for nothing else remains. There was a worshipper among the Children of Israel who would perform formal prayer at night. He would take his praying to beneath a tree where a bird with a sweet voice would sing. Revelation came to the messenger of the era: "Tell him: 'Thou hast become accustomed to seclusion. Thy degree has fallen because thou are not attending to anything of that.'"

Some have achieved such a degree in their conversations (with God) that fire has broken out in the other side of the dwelling and they did not become aware of it! The foot of one of them was cut during (his) formal prayer on some pretext, and he was unaware of it. Revelation came to David (A): "A person who claimed to love Me lied and slept all night. Does the friend not desire the sight of the Friend? Whoever seeks me, I am with him." Moses (A) said: "O Lord God, where art Thou that I may seek Thee?" He answered: "Whenever thou hast intended to seek (Me), thou hast found (Me)."

*THE SIXTH SIGN* is that worship becomes easy for one and its burdensomeness falls away. Someone says: "For twenty years I forced myself strenuously to perform the night formal prayer. Afterwards, I have taken delight in that for twenty years." When love becomes strong, no pleasure equals the pleasure of worship. How can it itself be difficult?

*THE SEVENTH SIGN* is that one loves all of His devout servants and one is merciful and compassionate to them, and one holds all unbelievers and rebels (against God) in enmity. As He said: (*They are*) *hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.* (Q. 48:29) One of the prophets asked: "O Lord God, who are Thy saints and friends?" He answered: "Those who are captivated with Me, like small children are captivated with their mothers. And just as a bird takes refuge in its nest, they take refuge with the remembrance of Me. Just as a leopard becomes enraged and fears nothing, they become enraged when a person commits a sin."

These and signs like these are many. They are present in him whose love is complete. The love of him who has some of them in him is in accordance with that (amount).<sup>56</sup>

### **For what purpose were you created?**

One answer al-Ghazzali gives is to be a lover of goodness.

Know that since love is the greatest of the stations, becoming acquainted with the remedy for achieving that is important. For, whoever desires to become a lover of goodness, the first step is that he turn away from all things except (the beloved). Then, he continuously looks upon (the beloved). When he sees (only the beloved's) face, but the hands, feet, and hair are concealed—and that is also good—he strives to see (the rest) also, so that every beauty he sees will increase his inclination. If he is persevering, the inclination will appear in him, small or great.

Then, the love for God Most High is also thus. The first condition is that one turn one's face away from the world and cleanse one's soul from loving it, for the love for other than God Most High will distract (one) from the love for Him. This is like cleaning the ground of thorns and weeds. Then, one seeks the spiritual knowledge of Him; for, the cause of anyone's not loving Him is that he has not come to know Him. If that (were) not so, (His) beauty and perfection would naturally be beloved. When a person comes to know (Abu Bakr) Siddiq and ('Umar) Faruq, he cannot not love them. Their virtues and laudable acts naturally (inspire) love. Obtaining spiritual knowledge is like putting a seed in the soil. Then, one continually occupies oneself in remembrance (of God) and meditation. This is like watering (the seed), for whoever remembers a person much, will certainly find an intimacy with him.<sup>57</sup>

### **In what does your happiness lie? In what does your misery lie?**

According to al-Ghazzali, one sign of happiness is repentance and one sin of misery is sin.

Whoever has understood the true nature of the human soul and what the manner of its connection to the body is, its relationship to the Divine Presence, and what the cause of the veil between it and the (Divine Presence) is, one does not doubt that sin is the cause of the veil and repentance is the cause of acceptance. For, the human soul is, in its origin, a

<sup>56</sup> Alchemy, pp. 923-5.

<sup>57</sup> Alchemy, p. 922.

pure essence of the essence of the angels. It is like a mirror in which the Divine Presence shows Itself when, upon departure from this world, (the soul) has not been tarnished. With every sin one commits, a darkness is deposited upon the mirror of the soul; and with every act of devotion, a light attaches itself to it and drives off that darkness from the soul.

The effects of the lights of devotion and the darkness of sins are continually following one another in the mirror. When the darkness has become great and one has repented, the lights of devotion rout the darkness. The soul returns to its clarity and purity. However, if one is so stubborn in one's sinning that the tarnish has reached the essence of the soul, and penetrated it deeply, it will not be receptive to treatment any more. It is like the mirror that has been corroded by tarnish. Such a soul is itself unable to repent, except by (uselessly) uttering with the tongue: "I have repented."<sup>58</sup>

Our happiness also lies in being proactive in the battle between our angelic and satanic forces according to al-Ghazzali:

As a result, there is continuous warfare and opposition between these two armies. One says: "Do it!" while the other says: "Do it not!" One remains continually between these two importuning (forces). If the religious impulse is dug in firmly in the battle with the carnal impulse and is steadfast, its steadfastness) is called "patience." Therefore, that is the meaning of patience. If it overcomes the carnal impulse and repulses it, its triumph is called "victory." While the battle continues in him, this is called "the earnest striving against the self." So, the meaning of patience is the remaining firm of the religious impulse in opposition against the carnal impulse. Wherever these two opposing armies are not present, there is no patience. This is because there is no need of patience for the angels, while beasts and children do not themselves have the power of patience.

...The point is that thou know that patience is a battlefield, and a battlefield is a place where there are two opposing armies. These two armies—one is the angelic cavalry and the other is the demonic cavalry—are gathered in the human breast. Therefore, the first step in the way of religion is involving oneself in this battle, for the demonic hosts have seized the field of the breast in childhood, and the angelic hosts have appeared at the approach of puberty. Consequently, so long as one has not triumphed over the carnal appetite, one will not achieve his (spiritual) happiness. So long as one does not fight and is not steadfast in battle, one

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<sup>58</sup> Alchemy, p. 695.

will not prevail. Whoever does not involve himself in this war is he who has surrendered his guardianship to Satan. And whoever has controlled his appetite and made it obedient to the Law has prevailed over it, is as the Messenger (S) said: "*God aided me in the battle with Satan so that he surrendered to me.*" Usually one is engaged in earnest struggle. One time there is victory, another time rout; one time appetite prevails, and another time the religious impulse. That fortress will not be conquered save with patience and steadfastness.<sup>59</sup>

As one obtains victory in the battle within, al-Ghazzali points out that one's longing for God increases bringing greater spiritual happiness.

So, thou must recognize the meaning of longing, what longing for God Most High is, for there is no love without longing. But, one by whom this is not recognized at all, has no longing. If it is recognized, is present, and is seen; it is also not longing. Therefore, longing is for something that is present in one respect and absent in another, like the beloved who is present in the imagination, but absent from the eye. The meaning of longing is "request" and "seeking" for that to become present in the eye so that perception may become complete. Then, from this thou comest to know that it is not possible for the longing for God Most High to be fulfilled in this world. It is present in spiritual knowledge, but absent from witnessing. Witnessing is the perfection of spiritual knowledge, just as seeing is the perfection of the imagination.<sup>60</sup>

**4. As for those attributes which are gathered inside you: some are the attributes of beasts of burden, some are the attributes of predatory animals, some are the attributes of satanic forces, and some are the attributes of the angels. Which of these is you? Which is the truth of your essential nature, while the others are foreign and borrowed? If you do not know this, you cannot seek your own happiness, because for each of these there is a different nutriment and a different happiness.**

Whereas in the first three paragraphs of the Prolegomena, al-Ghazzali places emphasis on knowledge, here at paragraphs four, five and six, it is more about his second fundamental—states—and its aspect of will power, that which gives to or withholds energy from the self or without it.

<sup>59</sup> Alchemy, pp. 712, 713.

<sup>60</sup> Alchemy, p. 927.

According to al-Ghazzali, while we have bestial (lust, attraction to pleasure), predatory (anger, avoidance of pain) and satanic tendencies (hypocrisy, envy, greed, etc.) within us, we also have angelic qualities. The choice we make as to what character we want to have is based on our free will.

Al-Ghazzali describes two angels in particular—conscience and will power. He calls conscience and will power the religious impulse and lust and anger (the animal soul) in their various levels as satanic powers. This, then, is another battle of the greater struggle against the same enemy—religious impulse (the angelic hosts of conscience and will power) against the animal soul (satanic hosts, i.e. lust and anger):

Moreover, at first, a human being is created in the character of the beasts, and the craving for food, clothing, decoration, amusement, and play have been made dominant over him. Then, at the time of puberty, a light from the angelic lights appears in him and he sees the results of affairs in that light. Indeed, two angels have been appointed over him, of which the beasts are deprived. One angel guides him and shows him the way by means of a light which spreads to him from the lights of the angel so that he recognizes the end of affairs and sees the prudence of affairs, until he comes to know himself and God Most High by that light. He understands that the end result of the appetites is total destruction, even if there be delight for the moment. He understands that his pleasure and ease are quickly transitory, while his sorrow will be long lasting. This guidance is not for the beasts...<sup>61</sup>

Our conscience operates out of our practical intellect. Our practical intellect is the place of our conscience. It is a natural disposition in us and exists to some extent in animals who are naturally disposed to know that their very survival depends on them staying with the mean, on the Straight Path. Our conscience is also naturally predisposed but because of our free will, we are free to accept or reject the advice of our conscience. Al-Ghazzali, then turns to free will or will power.

However, this guidance is not sufficient, for if one learns that (something) causes loss and that one does not possess the power to ward it off, what is the benefit? A sick person knows that the disease is harmful to him, but he is unable to repulse it. Therefore, God, may He be praised, has appointed the other angel over him to give him strength and power and to support and direct him so that he will refrain

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<sup>61</sup> Alchemy, p. 711.

from that which he has learned is harmful to him. As it is his need that he control his lusts, something else must appear in him to oppose that in order to escape harm in the future. This compulsion for opposition is that of the angelic hosts, while the compulsion to give rein to the appetites is that of the demonic hosts. This compulsion to oppose the carnal appetite is what we call the "religious impulse," and the compulsion to give rein to the carnal appetites we call the "carnal impulse."<sup>62</sup>

God has given us the instrument to be able to overcome the negative tendencies (lust, attraction to pleasure, bestial, and anger, avoidance of pain, predatory as well as imagination in the service of lust and anger or satanic forces within) and that is through our free will power.

Our free will is the highest developed form of motivation in nature's mode of operation. It is naturally disposed by universal guidance to be fair and just as well as to avoid conflict. When our nurturing process is oriented towards preserving our moral health, our free will is gradually trained to accept the counsel of cognition (thinking and reasoning). Cognition, as has been mentioned, contains both the cognitive and practical intellect.

Through habit, our free will has learned to seek the counsel of cognition before making a decision. Our free will deliberates, comes to an understanding of the situation and draws a conclusion. Our free will is then free to accept or reject the conclusion. However, as our free will has a choice, it makes the final decision. Our ability to reason is only a guide, a counselor. Our free will is naturally disposed to be higher than our ability to reason.

Al-Ghazzali points out:

So long as he is subservient to his free will and that which it does is not in accordance to the rule of the Religious Law, he is following his lusts. His behavior is not that of a servant of God. His (spiritual) happiness lies in his servitude.<sup>63</sup>

If our free will accepts the advice, we regulate our "self" (body, spirit, soul, heart) in a state of balance and harmony, centered in positive dispositions like temperance, courage, and wisdom. If another benefits from this centeredness, we have attained the highest of the positive dispositions, that of being fair and just towards the Creator, the self, nature, and others.

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<sup>62</sup> Alchemy, pp. 711-12.

<sup>63</sup> Alchemy, p. 195.

*FREE WILL REBELS AGAINST REASON*

When our nurturing process has not fostered the development of a healthy moral self, we have not been nurtured to operate out of reason. Instead, we operate out of the locus of intuition through imagination.

The process is explained like this: our free will seeks the advice of our reason. Our reason responds through our imagination, an internal sense, as has been shown, that is more firmly connected to our animal soul (affective/behavioral systems) than to reason (the cognitive system). The irrational alliance of our free will and animal soul (affect-behavior or lust, anger) combine to force our ability to reason (our cognitive system) to begin to rationalize and legitimize desires that our animal soul (lust and anger, the affective-behavioral systems) could never conceive. We develop what is called overconsciousness.

In this situation, instead of our free will exercising its natural disposition to fairness and justice, our free will falls under its stronger natural disposition to avoid conflict. In doing so, our free will loses its own liberty and freedom, allowing unconscious and preconscious forces to dominate it. Since the animal soul (affect-behavior systems, lust and anger, attraction to pleasure and avoidance of pain) is not capable of consciousness, they are not able to regulate us, but can dominate over our free will.

Our free will often refuses the advice of our reason just to show that it is free. Everything depends on the decision of our free will. Our reason is only a guide. Our free will, then, is subject to a kind of depravity which extends to all aspects of our "self." Our free will may be depraved through false reasoning or through choosing unrestrained freedom and an inclination to content the senses. When our free will turns from understanding and reason, there is nothing we can do but do what it wants in agreement with the external senses. According to traditional psychology, it is almost impossible to retrieve a perverted will.

*FREE WILL ALLIES WITH IMAGINATION AGAINST REASON*

Our imagination is likely to become an enemy of our ability to reason. As our sense of imagination is near the outer or external senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling), it may seduce us to accept something and then, as an intermediary between our external senses and our animal soul (lust and anger, affective-behavioral systems), establish a coalition against our ability to reason. This could explain how rash judgments are strengthened in our imagination arousing our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems), and overthrowing our ability to reason. Our imagination can be a dangerous guide to us in terms of our ability to center our "self."

***FREE WILL ALLIES WITH IMAGINATION  
AND THE EXTERNAL SENSES AGAINST REASON***

Our knowledge, it will be recalled, is dependent upon our external senses because they are the doors through which all impressions from the outer world pass to our higher functions of thought and they may also dominate over our ability to reason. The ready response of our ability to reason the reports from the outer or external senses by-pass our conscience as they quickly turn to a new stimulus. The external senses are easily moved by the animal soul (affective-behavioral systems). A picture or mere description is enough to awaken passions of love or grief.

The strength of our sense impressions as opposed to our ability to reason can be recalled when we reflect on the parting of two friends. The idea of some particular gesture in a parting friend strikes us more deeply than all the reasoning in the world. The sound of a name repeated, certain words, or a sad tone goes to our very heart. A present object moves our animal soul (affective-behavioral system) much more vehemently than when we perceive an image through our recall. When the desired thing is not present, our imagination represents the pleasure as far off, but when the thing desired is present, nothing seems to be left but to attain it.

Our external senses are capable of a degree of knowledge and of pleasure and pain. Since they cannot comprehend the full meaning of objects presented to them, they report to us merely outward images and in their impressions emphasize qualities agreeable to our external senses rather than to our general welfare. Not knowing all that takes place in imagination and in reason, the external senses may accept enemies as friends. Through their strength, they may provoke serious disturbances in us.

They work on our imagination without waiting for our reasoning to deliberate; they set off an alarm to our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems) to the extent that the voice of our reason cannot be heard nor the advice of understanding be accepted by our free will. Representing pleasures that are most apparent and present, they strongly provoke our animal soul. Even though they are our first teacher, instead of freeing us from deceit, they are seen to be able to deceive us themselves.

***FREE WILL ALLIES WITH IMAGINATION IN THE  
AFFECTIVE-BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS  
(ANIMAL SOUL) AGAINST REASON***

Our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems) is naturally disposed to allow us to regulate it through our ability to reason. When it joins in an alliance with our free will, our animal soul and free will

follow the external senses. Our outer or external senses respond to an object. Our reason deliberates. Our free will is naturally disposed towards the positive as is our reason. However, when our free will is under the influence of our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems), our free will only sees the present, which fills our imagination more readily than does the future, and our reason is subdued.

Our free will is a superior function to our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems). It is joined with our reason in the same way our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems) is joined to our imagination. We are naturally disposed to guide our free will towards action that is for our well-being. However, we contain an inferior kind of thought-action process and that is the process of imagination-animal soul (affective-behavioral systems). Both of the latter (imagination and affective-behavior) act rashly without the deliberation of our reason. They are often too powerful to allow our reason to advise and our free will to accept the advice.

Our will is easily misled. Naturally inclined to avoid conflict, it succumbs to our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems). They all grow out of our system of motivation and so have an established relationship. Our reason can control our action only through our free will and our free will frequently yields to our animal soul (affective-behavioral systems). Strife within us is most often between our reason and our systems arising out of motivation. Our external senses entice our imagination and our imagination joins with the animal soul (affective-behavioral systems) and they, in turn, entice our free will away from following our reason.

### *CENTERING THROUGH FREE WILL*

As nature in its mode of operation was perfected by the Creator in us with the gift of consciousness, bypassing our free will causes an imbalance in our natural harmony and equilibrium. This is because the process of our free will within us needs to consciously seek the counsel of reason as the regulator of nature within us. When our regulator is bypassed, our system loses its balance and equilibrium. If our nurturing process has not been able to preserve a healthy, moral self, traditional psychology provides the means to restore health.

If our free will accepts the guidance of our reason, we can become centered (as long as our reason remains balanced as well). The ideas upon which our internal sense of reason deliberates come from our imagination. Our internal sense of imagination may be functioning according to the Divine Will, operating through universal and particular guidance. This process becomes strong when good habits are formed in us from birth.

Without this, we become prone to negative traits and our free will is not inclined towards choosing positive traits or attitudes. It is motivated by our natural disposition of attraction to pleasure, the original goal of which is to preserve the species. However, when it is unregulated, even our species is threatened by over, under or undeveloped eating, sex, drinking, and so forth. Our mirror of self is so encrusted with rust and dust that we no longer can see our "self." We become alienated from our natural disposition and lose all sense of identity and direction. We readily then forget our original goal of submission to the Will of God by completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation, that is, becoming conscious of our "self." We are no longer able to avoid pain/harm because the natural disposition of even our immunity systems break down. Our free will, naturally disposed to be free to choose or not to choose to submit to the Will of God, is no longer free but enslaved by our animal soul (affective and behavioral systems) leading to the tyranny of our "self" in complete opposition to the original natural disposition of our free will to being just.

Al-Ghazzali recognizes the human will to control everything, but points out that lacking the power to do so, we seek knowledge of everything in order to gain mastery.

There is this in the nature of a human being that requires him to desire that he be everything. Since he is incapable of this, he desires that everything be his; that is, that everything be subservient to him and under his control and (subject to) his will. However, he is incapable of achieving this also, for there are two kinds of existing things:

ONE KIND is that which the control of man does not touch, such as the heavens, stars, the substances of the angels and the devils, and that which is beneath the earth, at the depths of the oceans, and under mountains. Therefore, man desires to conquer all of these through knowledge so that they come under the control of his knowledge, even though they are not in his power. For this reason, he desires that the kingdoms of heaven and earth, the wonders of the land and sea, all be made known, just as a person who is incapable of arranging the chess pieces, but wishes in all events to know how they have been placed, for this too is a kind of mastery.<sup>64</sup>

And once we are winning the battle with our animal soul (lust and anger) and our satanic aspect (ego, imagination), we have "cleared our heart of the thorns of worldly temptation," al-Ghazzali speaks of the seeds of good character that will be able to grow.

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<sup>64</sup> Alchemy, p. 596.

So, when the soul has been cleared of the thorns of worldly temptations and the seeds have been planted, nothing still remains that is related to free choice. (The soul) has chosen to be there (in that condition). After that, one remains waiting for what will grow and appear. Usually the seed is not wasted, for God Most High says: *Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his harvest.* (Q. 42:20) He says: "Whoever cultivates the work of the Hereafter and sows the seed, We shall bestow increase upon him" ...<sup>65</sup>

**5. For the beasts of burden, their nutriment and their happiness is in eating, sleeping, and copulating. If you are of their kind, you try to satisfy your stomach and your genitals night and day. As for predatory beasts, their nutriment and their happiness is in giving free rein to tearing apart, killing, and rage. The nutriment of satanic forces is the encouragement of evil, treachery, and deceit. If you are of them, get busy in their activities and attain your ease and good fortune!**

The intention in attaining good character, according to al-Ghazzali, is to develop angelic qualities to replace the satanic.

Know that the (spiritual) happiness of a human being is that one become of the nature of angels. For, one's essence is of them and one has come into this world a stranger. One's origin is the world of the angels. Every foreign characteristic that one bears from here distances one from being in conformity with (the angels). When going to that place, one must become of their character and not carry any attributes from this place.<sup>66</sup>

The Quran gives references to what having a good character means:

Know that the signs of a good character are those which God Most High has described concerning the believers in the Quran in the first ten verses of the chapter beginning: *Successful indeed are the believers...* (Q. 23:1-10), and in the verse where He says: *Those who turn in repentance and those who serve (Him)...* (Q. 9:112), and in those verses where He says: *And the servants of the Compassionate are they who*

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<sup>65</sup> Alchemy, pp. 459-60.

<sup>66</sup> Alchemy, p. 523.

*walk upon the earth modestly* to the end (of the chapter) (Q. 25:63-7).<sup>67</sup>

Even with angelic qualities, one needs to keep to moderation in order to complete and perfect human nature according to al-Ghazzali:

In the same manner, all character has two aspects: one is praiseworthy and one is blameworthy. The objective is moderation. For example, we order the miser to give away wealth until it becomes easy for him, but not to the point of extravagance, for that is also blameworthy. But the scale for (weighing) that is from the Religious Law, just as the scale for (weighing) the treatment of the body is the science of medicine. He must become so that whatever the Law commands him to give, he gives, and its giving becomes easy for him and that there not be in him a demand to keep and hold on to (wealth). And whatever the Law commands him to keep, he should keep and the urge to give (of that) not be in him, so that he be moderate. Therefore, if those urges continue to appear in him—but he represses them by force—he is still ill. However, he is praiseworthy because he is indeed forcing himself to take his medicine and this compulsion is the way that (good character) will become natural to him.<sup>68</sup>

Again, al-Ghazzali stresses moderation:

Any attribute that it is not possible for a person to eliminate should be kept at the (the level of) moderation, so that in one way it is as though it were eliminated. As water is not devoid of warmth or coldness, that which is tepid and equable resembles that which is devoid of both (extremes). Therefore, moderation and the mean in all qualities have been commanded because they are better.<sup>69</sup>

Our angelic hosts of conscience and will power have to struggle against our animal soul. What fuel did God give for the armaments of the battle? What is the source of energy?

According to traditional psychology, energy in our liver undergoes successive processes of sublimation in our heart and brain. The purity of this energy and according to the function it performs as natural, vital, or nervous energy, serves a group of powers of nature in its mode of operation.

<sup>67</sup> Alchemy, p. 465.

<sup>68</sup> Alchemy, p. 459.

<sup>69</sup> Alchemy, p. 460.

Vegetal functions promote nutrition, growth, and reproduction. The nutritive function works by a number of subordinate systems: retention, digestion, assimilation, and expulsion. The energy for the vegetal functions originates in our liver where our humors are, as well so well known today to Chinese, Indian and ancient Greek methods of alternative medicine.

Our humors move by natural energy through the veins carrying sustenance to the body, performing the tasks of the vegetal systems. According to traditionalists such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna), we contain four humors:

Humor (*akhlāt*) or body fluid is that fluid, moist, physical substance into which our aliment is transformed. That part of the aliment which has the capacity to be transformed into a body substance, either by itself or in combination with something else, thereby being capable of assimilation by the members or organs and completely integrated into the tissues, is the healthy or good humor. It is what replaces the loss that the body substance undergoes.

Primary fluids are the sanguineous humor (blood), the serous humor (phlegm), the bilious humor (yellow bile) and the atrabilious humor (black bile).<sup>70</sup>

#### *THE SANGUINEOUS HUMOR*

The nature [dynamic aspect] of the sanguineous humor is hot and moist in temperament. It may be normal or abnormal, conforming to its nature or not. Normal blood is red in color, sweet in taste and free from smell.<sup>71</sup>

#### *THE SEROUS HUMOR*

The nature of the serous humor is cold and moist in temperament. It may be normal or abnormal. Normal (sweet) serous humor can be transformed into blood at any time, as it is an imperfectly matured blood. It is a kind of sweet fluid that is only slightly colder than the body, but it is much colder than the bilious and blood humors.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Avicenna, *Canon of Medicine*, pp 32-44. It is important for traditional psychologists to know that Avicenna's Canon of Medicine was translated into Latin not long after it was written. The Latin edition was the major medical textbook for 700 years in Europe.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

***THE BILIOUS HUMOR***

The bilious humor is the foam of blood. It is bright in color. It is light and pungent. The redder it is, the hotter it is. It is formed in the liver and then follows one of two courses: either it circulates with the blood, or it passes on to the gallbladder. The part which passes into the blood stream assists in two purposes. First of all, the portion which goes to the blood is essential for nutrition of organs such as the lungs. It makes the blood light and thin for easy passage through the narrow channels of the body. The portion that goes into the gallbladder is thus prevented, from vitiating the body and providing nutrition to the gallbladder. Its subsidiary functions are the cleansing of the intestine from the thick and viscid mucus and stimulation of the musculature of the intestine and rectum for proper defecation.<sup>73</sup>

***THE ATRABILIOUS HUMOR***

Atrabilious humor is cold and dry in nature. There are natural and abnormal varieties.

Normal atrabilious humor is a sediment of the normal blood. It has a taste between sweetness and bitterness. After being formed in the liver, a part goes to the blood and another to the spleen.

The part which goes with the blood is essential for two purposes: the nutrition of organs such as the bones which have an appreciable quantity of the atrabilious bile in their composition, and to make the blood properly thick and heavy.

The portion which is in excess of these requirements is taken up by the spleen essentially for its own nutrition but also to save the blood from being damaged. The portion which goes from the spleen into the stomach serves the purpose of making the stomach strong and firm. It also stimulates the appetite by its sour taste.

This action of atrabilious humor is somewhat similar to that of the bilious humor. Just as the surplus of bile in the blood goes to the gallbladder, and the surplus from the gallbladder passes into the intestine, the excess of atrabilious humor from the blood goes to the spleen, what is left over from the spleen goes to the stomach to induce appetite. The surplus of bilious humor excites peristaltic movements and thus assists evacuation, but the surplus of atrabilious humor

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

encourages the intake of food. So, blessed be God, the best of creators and the mightiest of rulers!<sup>74</sup>

### *VITAL ENERGY OF THE HEART*

Natural energy of the vegetal functions arises from blood in the liver. It passes with the humors through the veins to all parts of the body. Some natural energy and humors enter the cavity of the heart and through transformation there, becomes the vital energy, a substance less gross than that from the liver. Vital energies are carried to the organs of the body by our arteries. They make life possible. Vital energies are transformed in the brain where they become nervous energy. This makes perception and motivation to movement possible.

Vital energy of the sensitive functions arises from blood in the heart as transformed natural energy and move by way of the body through the arteries. The heart is the seat of life, of heat, of pulse, of the vital energies, and of nature in its mode of operation. It is the organ that lives first and dies last.

### *COGNITIVE VITAL AND NERVOUS ENERGIES RESPOND TO NATURAL DISPOSITIONS*

Nervous energy arises in the brain from the vital energy reaching it from the heart. The brain is the center for motivation and perception. Motivation allows movement and perception consists of external and internal senses.

We have no control over these energies and how they are sent throughout the body except through what we eat and the air that we breathe. However, we can choose to become aware of our "self," in which case we would be forcing our "nervous energy" to be used for this purpose. This will serve to arm our angelic energies.

### *AWAKENING THE NATURAL DISPOSITION TO CONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF*

Consciousness is developed through "reminders" or Signs that remind the self of its origin and of the nobility it gained when it received the infusion of the Divine Spirit, signified by human values. They include the knowledge that God is One, that truth, beauty, goodness, and love exist and are expressed in the original creation we try to imitate in response to a natural disposition to creativity, imitating the Original Creation.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Nothing happens without a source of energy. The more energy we have, the more vibrancy we have. While it is usually thought that if we eat better food, we will have more energy and this is true to some extent, there is also a qualitative energy that comes from spiritual practices which cannot be measured in the usual sense. Its presence can only be known through the resulting actions.

**6. As for the angels, their nutriment and their happiness are the contemplation of the Divine Presence. They are immune from the lust, anger and the attributes of the beasts and predators. If you have the angelic essence in your nature, strive to come to know the Divine Presence and open yourself to the contemplation of Its Beauty. Liberate yourself from the grip of lust and anger. Strive until you understand the reason for the creation of these bestial traits within you. Were they created to capture you, to carry you into service of the self, and to enslave you in forced labor day and night? You must capture them before they capture you! You (must) make of one your vehicle and of the other your weapon for the journey that has been put before you. Use them in these few days that we are in this stopping place to hunt, with their aid, the seed of your own (spiritual) happiness.**

We are generated out of the Divine Spirit and natural dispositions or “soul” of the mineral, plant, and animal forms, which have been guided by universal guidance. We may evolve the ability of consciousness through particular guidance if we will to do so. This enhances the actualization of conscience and will power as our own special natural disposition. Al-Ghazzali points out:

Know that a human being has been created of two things: one is the body, which can be seen with the physical eye. The other is the soul, which cannot be perceived except by the eye of the soul. For each one of these two, there is goodness and unseemliness. One is called the beauty of creation; the other, the beauty of disposition. Beauty of disposition consists of the inner form, just as beauty of creation consists of the outer form. As the outer form is not good if only the eyes are good, or only the mouth is good, or only the nose is good, so that the eyes, mouth, and nose together are not good and not suited to one another; in the same manner, the inner form is not good so long as four powers in it are not good: the power of reason, the power of anger, the power of the carnal appetite, and the power of preserving equilibrium among the other three.

As for the power of reason, by that we mean sagacity, the goodness of which is enough to easily distinguish between

truth and lies in speech, (between) the good and the unseemly in deeds, and between the true and the false in principles of belief. When this perfection has been achieved by the human soul, thence wisdom comes into being, the source of all kinds of happiness, as God Most High said: *And he unto whom wisdom is given, he hath truly received abundant good.* (Q. 2:269)

The goodness of the power of anger is that it be under the command of wisdom and the Religious Law and arise at their command and end at their command.

The goodness of the power of the carnal appetite is that it not be rebellious and that it be under the command of the Religious Law and reason so that its obedience to them may be easy for it.

The goodness of the power of preservation of the equilibrium is that it keep anger and passion subjugated to the direction of religion and reason.<sup>75</sup>

Dispositions or states of being are both natural and acquired. Whether natural or acquired, either can be regulated by conscious or unconscious habits, habits being the continual repetition of certain acts.

Natural dispositions are never changed, in the sense that the original is lost, but rather, through nurturing, they can become hidden or concealed just as a mirror can lose its reflective capacity with the formation of rust, dust, or fog. The mirror is still there, but it reflects rust, dust, and fog rather than the its original, naturally disposed polished surface. Therefore, the natural disposition changes at the same time that it is always there and no energy is lost in the change. Al-Ghazzali explains further:

Know that God Most High has praised Mustafa (S) for his good disposition, saying: *And, lo! Thou art of a tremendous nature!* (Q. 68:4) And the Messenger (S) said: "I was sent to complete the excellences of character." And he (S) said: "The greatest thing placed in the scales is a good disposition."

Someone appeared before the Messenger (S) and asked: "What is religion?" He answered: "A good disposition." They came from the right and the left, asking (the same question again and again). He replied in the same way until at the last time he said: "Dost thou not know? That thou not anger." He (S) was asked: "What is the most virtuous of works?" He said: "A good disposition."

Someone said to the Messenger (S): "Give me some advice." He said: "Fear God Most High wherever thou mayst

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<sup>75</sup> Alchemy, p. 452.

be." (The man) said: "Another." He said: "Do a good deed after every bad act in order to erase it." (The man) said: "Another." He said: "Mix with people good-naturedly." And he (S) said: "God Most High will not make whomever He has given a good disposition and a good appearance the food of fire."

And he (S) was told: "Such-and-such a woman fasts by day and spends her night in formal prayer, but has a bad disposition and her tongue afflicts her neighbors." He said: "Her place is in hell." And the Messenger (S) said: "A bad disposition ruins devotion as vinegar (ruins) honey."

And the Messenger (S) used to say as he made supplication: "O Lord God! Thou hast created my creation well; make my disposition also good." And he (S) used to say: "O Lord God! Grant (us) health, vigor, and a good disposition." The Messenger (S) was asked: "What is the best thing that God Most High gives His servant?" He answered: "A good disposition." And he (S) said: "A good disposition destroys sins as the sun (destroys) ice."<sup>76</sup>

We are born with a natural disposition to meet physiological and psychological needs of the self. Psychological needs, which are part of the our natural disposition, are positive aspects of nature in its mode of operation trying to perfect our "self." These form the mirror of our "self." The nurturing process clouds, distorts, and darkens this mirror, thereby distancing us from our true nature. Change is effected through methods known as "polishing" or "purifying" the mirror of self so that it can once again reflect the positive aspects of our nature which we were naturally disposed by God (*fitrat*). Al-Ghazzali clarifies:

...Just as with outward beauty where extreme goodness and extreme unseemliness are not common and most fall in between, so it is with a good disposition. Therefore, every one must make an effort so that, even if one does not achieve perfection, one comes nearer to the degree of perfection. If all of one's character is not good, well, some parts or more of it will be good. As there is no limit to the differences between beauty and ugliness, the same is true of one's character.

This is the whole meaning of a good disposition. It is not one thing, nor ten, nor a hundred; for it is much more. However, it originates with the powers of knowledge, anger, passion, and a just equilibrium: the rest are branches of it.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Alchemy, pp. 450-51.

<sup>77</sup> Alchemy, p. 454.

Change, growth, and transformation in the traditional perspective do not mean that the natural disposition of reproduction or self-preservation should be repressed or suppressed because the human race could not exist without them. The point made in the traditions is that the mean and moderation, balance and equilibrium, are the norm so that all natural dispositions function properly.

Dispositions are described as "that which is the source of all of the actions that the self undertakes spontaneously without thinking about them." A natural disposition may be the result of natural and physical make-up by which we are endowed at birth with what is known physiologically as temperament. Temperament arises from the combination of elemental qualities of hot-wet, hot-dry, cold-wet, and cold-dry which develop depending on the constellation of birth, the geographic location of our parents at the time of the intercourse which leads to conception, of a mother during the time of pregnancy, the food that they eat, and the air that they breath. Even though temperament is natural, it can be changed, regulated, or neutralized as a disposition or psychological structure through moral healing and the centering process.

#### *ATTITUDE: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE*

A disposition that becomes embedded in the self is known as a trait or an attitude. In the traditional perspective, we are created pure and good and start life with a "clean slate," in the sense that we are free of negative traits and attitudes. Negative traits develop through contact with one's environment—parents, family, friends, schooling, work, and so forth. These traits are directly related to the way a person lives and thinks and are reinforced by one's words and deeds and concealed if negative resulting from the lack of nurturing guidance. Penetrating through our "self," traits or attitudes become the origin and cause of human actions.

When a negative disposition is reinforced through behavior, it becomes imbedded in us as a trait that requires greater conscious effort on the part of our cognitive system to undo. Al-Ghazzali describes our positive and negative traits:

The power of anger, should it become excessive, is called impetuosity; while if it is deficient, it is called cowardice and spiritlessness. When it is in balance—not too much or too little—it is called courage. Courage gives rise to nobility, high-mindedness, bravery, mildness, patience, moderation, control of anger, and characteristics like these. From impetuosity come boasting, vanity, conceit, recklessness, vainglory, throwing oneself into dangerous affairs, and the like. From its deficiency come self-abasement, helplessness, apprehension, fawning, and abjectness.

The power of the carnal appetite, should it become excessive, is called gluttony. From it, arise impudence, foulness, unmanliness, uncleanness, jealousy, being despised by the powerful, being contemptuous of the poor, and the like. If it is deficient, lethargy, dastardliness, and dishonor (come). When it is in balance, it is called chasteness. From it, come modesty, contentment, patience, tolerance, grace, wit, and approval.

Each one of these (powers) has two extremes that are condemned and unseemly, but the medium is good and praiseworthy. That medium, between those two extremes, is narrower than a hair. That medium is its Straight Path. It is as narrow as the Bridge of the Hereafter. Whoever walks straight upon this bridge, is sure to (cross) that (other) Bridge tomorrow (in safety).<sup>78</sup>

The purpose of traditional psychology, then, is to first try to preserve the *fitrat* or natural dispositions of our self—which is called the healthy self—through the nurturing process.

One of the methods of both preservation of one's natural disposition or restoration back to it is self-training and conscious effort to adopt positive habits. It has been shown through centuries of experience that this will lead to a positive disposition and the stabilization of positive traits resulting in a healthy self. Traditional psychology and the methods of preservation of psychic health and/or its restoration when an imbalance occurs, basically deal with the development of traits that are slow to decline. We become centered when traits fall under the regulation of reason so that a positive disposition evolves.

The positive traits that indicate "centeredness" in traditional psychology develop out of the previous three systems: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. The positive disposition of the affective system is temperance. The positive disposition of the behavioral system is courage. The positive disposition of the cognitive intellect is wisdom. When these three positive dispositions are in balance, regulated by the conscious cognitive system, the fourth positive disposition is attained, that of justice. According to traditional psychology, fairness or justice is one of the natural dispositions of our free will. These are the positive traits, all of which appear in the Quran and the *Sunnah*. They are chosen as the "mothers of character" from among the many positive traits mentioned because of the central role they play in the analysis of our "self." They are distinguished by various functions therein. These four positive traits are also mentioned by Plato and Aristotle with a slight difference in values. They are accepted into the Islamic tradition by al-Ghazzali for two clear reasons: first of all, they are part of the Quran and

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<sup>78</sup> Alchemy, p. 453.

the *Sunnah*; and secondly they can be arrived at through the observation of nature.

Therefore, these positive traits are part of the Signs of guidance and can be acquired by accepting particular guidance.

Al-Ghazzali operationalizes the positive traits:

The goodness of the power of anger is that it be under the command of wisdom and the Religious Law and arise at their command and end at their command.

The goodness of the power of the carnal appetite is that it not be rebellious and that it be under the command of the Religious Law and reason so that its obedience to them may be easy for it.

The goodness of the power of preservation of the equilibrium is that it keep anger and passion subjugated to the direction of religion and reason...

The power of knowledge, should it become excessive and involved in bad works, gives rise to deception and pedantry; while if it is deficient, it gives rise to foolishness and stupidity, However, when it is in balance, it gives rise to good planning, correct opinion, right thinking, and sound insight.<sup>79</sup>

### *THE QURAN AND CENTERING THROUGH THE POSITIVE TRAITS*

The Quran mentions these traits which bring about “centeredness” when they work together in balance and harmony giving equilibrium to the self. All four are referred to in one verse:

*“Believers are those who believe in God and His Messenger; then they doubt not,”* a belief that is a consequence of reason and consciousness as the highest form of wisdom, *“and strive with their benefits in the Way of God,”* indicating temperance since this striving is only possible to be in the Way of God (nature/nurture or *takwin/tashri*<sup>c</sup> guidance) when the unconscious, affective/ emotive function is regulated by the rational, conscious belief in God and His Messenger, *“and strive with their lives in the Way of God,”* clearly referring to the behavioral function and courage since this positive trait is only possible of attainment in the Way of God when the preconscious, behavioral function is regulated by the rational, conscious belief in God and His Messenger; *“they are the truthful ones,”* the just. (Q. 49:15)

Each of the three positive traits: courage, temperance, and wisdom may develop as negative traits through an overdevelopment, or underdevelopment of one of the three functions of affect, behavior, or cognition.

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<sup>79</sup> Alchemy, pp. 452, 453.

Al-Ghazzali counsels moderation and balance as previously mentioned:

It is for this that God Most High has ordained the middle way in all characteristics. He has forbidden both extremes, and gives punishment (for them), saying: *And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is a firm station between the two.* (Q. 25:67) He praised the person who does not skimp in spending, nor is extravagant, but stands between the two. And the Messenger (S) was told (by God): *And let not thy hand be chained to thy neck, nor open it with a complete opening, lest thou sit down rebuked, denuded.* (Q. 17:29) He said: "Do not tie up thy hand so as to give nothing, nor open it completely at one time and give away everything, lest thou be left without provisions and helpless."

So then, know that the absolutely good disposition is that in which all elements are balanced and correct within it, just as a beautiful countenance is that in which all of its parts are right and good.<sup>80</sup>

And recommends methods of treatment:

Know that for whoever desires to expel his bad disposition from himself, there is only one way, and that is that he do the opposite of whatever that (bad) disposition commands him (to do). The carnal appetite cannot be subdued except by opposition. Everything is overcome by its contrary, just as the treatment of an illness that causes heat is the consumption of cold (foods). The treatment of every illness that arises from anger is patience. The treatment of whatever arises from arrogance is humility. The treatment of whatever arises from miserliness is giving away wealth. The same (rule) is valid for all...

There are some that are not affected by human choice, just as a one cannot grow an apple tree from the stone of a date; but one can grow a date palm with the nurture and care that it the requires. In the same way, the roots of anger and carnal passion cannot be driven out of a human being. However, anger and carnal passion can be brought to the limit of moderation with discipline. This is made plain with experience. However, with respect to some people, it is more difficult. This difficulty arises for two reasons: one is that it has become stronger in the essence of one's innate nature, the

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<sup>80</sup> Alchemy, pp. 453-4.

second is that one has been in obedience to it for a long time, to the point that one is mastered by it.<sup>81</sup>

**7. When you have obtained that seed of happiness, place those (those tools) underfoot and turn your face to the resting place of your own (spiritual) happiness, that resting place for which the elite expression is the Divine Presence and for which the common expression is “Paradise.”**

There are those who never seek spiritual happiness. Al-Ghazzali gives reasons why:

Know that the reason for someone's not reaching God is that he has not traveled the path. The reason for someone's not traveling the path is that he has not sought it. The reason for someone's not seeking it is that he did not know, and his belief was incomplete. Indeed, the desire for the quest for the provisions of the Hereafter appears in whoever knows that the world causes misery and is but of a few days in duration, while the Hereafter is pure and everlasting. It is not a hardship for him to exchange something despicable for something valuable. Putting down the earthen jug so that tomorrow one will receive a golden jug is not very difficult.<sup>82</sup>

He describes those who seek spiritual happiness:

...if the desire for God Most High appears in someone, and he is one of those about whom God Most High says: *And he who desires the Hereafter...* (Q. 17:19), he should know what the effort is when He continues: ...*and strives for it with the effort necessary.* (Q. 17:19) Know that this effort is the traveling of the way! The traveler must first possess certain requisites that he has previously acquired; then, there is the document that he must hold firmly; then, there are a fortress and a castle that will give him refuge.<sup>83</sup>

One attains to the Divine Presence by undertaking the greater struggle. Al-Ghazzali quotes the famous saying of the Prophet:

The Messenger (S) used to say to the Companions when they returned from battle in defence of religion: “Ye have come from the lesser striving to the greater striving.” They asked: “What is that?” He answered: “The striving

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<sup>81</sup> Alchemy, pp. 456, 455.

<sup>82</sup> Alchemy, p. 535.

<sup>83</sup> Alchemy, pp. 471-2.

against one's self." And the Messenger (S) said: "Restrain the torment of thyself from the self and do not give rein to its whims in disobedience to God Most High Who will judge thee tomorrow and curse thee until thy parts all curse one another."<sup>84</sup>

According to the Prophet as quoted by al-Ghazzali in the Alchemy, the heart of all acts is our intention. It is for this that the Messenger (S) said: "God Most High does not look at your outward appearance and qualities; He looks at your heart and deeds." (His looking at the heart is because it is the locus of intention. And the Messenger (S) said: "Deeds are according to intention." Every person receives from his act of worship that which is his intention for that.<sup>85</sup>

Know that the learned religious scholars have said: "First learn the intention of the deed; then, the deed." Someone said: "Teach me an act that I may be engaged with night and day so that I not be devoid of good at any time." They said: "If thou canst not perform a good deed, then continually form good intentions so that the spiritual reward of that (unperformed deed) may be obtained."<sup>86</sup>

Our intention, according to a Tradition of the Prophet is better than our deed. Al-Ghazzali explains what this means.

Know that the Messenger (S) has said: "*The intention of the believer is better than his deed.*" The Intention of the believer is better than his deed: he did not mean by this that an intention without the deed is better than a deed without the intention. For, this itself is not a secret, that a deed without the intention is not an act of worship, while an intention without the deed is an act of worship. Instead, the meaning is that one's devotion is with body and soul, and these are two parts. Of these two, that which is in the soul is better. The reason for this is that the aim of an act of the body (lasts) until the disposition of the soul changes. The aim of the intention and the act of the soul does not (just last) until the disposition of the body changes.

People imagine thus: that the intention is necessary for the deed, but the truth of the matter is that the deed must be for the intention. For the object of all is the moving about of

<sup>84</sup> Alchemy, p. 463.

<sup>85</sup> Alchemy, p. 799.

<sup>86</sup> Alchemy, p. 800.

the soul. It is the sojourner to the next world, and (eternal) happiness or misfortune will be its portion.<sup>87</sup>

Intention needs to precede every act in order to have possible spiritual rewards. Without the intention, it is recorded—as good or bad depending on what the intention is—but without spiritual reward according to al-Ghazzali:

Know that there are three kinds of deeds: acts of devotion, sins, and the permitted.

(THE FIRST KIND: SINS.) It may be that because the Messenger (S) said: "*Verily deeds are according to intentions,*" that a sin, with a good intention, can also be counted as an act of worship. This is an error. Rather, on this one kind, intention has no effect on it, but a bad intention makes it worse. It is like this: a person backbites in order to please the heart of someone; or he establishes a mosque, school, or retreat using unlawful wealth and says: "My intention is good." He does not know even this much: that it is not good because a resolution to do good with evil is another evil. If he understands all (of this), he is a sinner. If he does not know and imagines that this is good, he is also a sinner, for acquiring knowledge is a religious obligation. Most of mankind's perdition is from ignorance.

THE SECOND KIND: ACTS OF DEVOTION. In these, intention has two aspects with regard to effect: one is that its basis becomes correct with the intention; and the other is that however much the intention is increased, the spiritual reward is multiplied. Whoever acquires the knowledge (of making an) intention can make ten good intentions with one act of devotion, so that it becomes several acts of devotion. For example, when one goes into retreat in the mosque.

THE THIRD KIND IS THE PERMITTED, and let no rational being who wallows in the permitted like heedless beasts neglect a good intention, for that is a great loss because he will be questioned about all of (these acts) and there will be a reckoning concerning all of the permitted things. He will be held accountable if his intention is bad. And, if it be good, it will redound to him. Otherwise, it will be quits. But he will have wasted time and spent it in that in which there is no benefit for him, and he will have disobeyed this verse: *And forget not thy portion of the world and be thou kind even as God has been kind to thee.* (Q. 28:77) That is, the world is transitory. Take thy portion from it so that it stays with thee. The Messenger (S) said: "The servant of God will be asked about all that he has done, even to the amount of collyrium

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<sup>87</sup> Alchemy, p. 802.

applied about the eyes, or the bit of earth rubbed with between fingers, or the hand placed upon the clothing of a brother.”<sup>88</sup>

For anyone of us overcome by passion al-Ghazzali says the best way to discipline it is through undertaking the greater struggle.

Whoever is overcome by passion, that passion is one's object of worship. When this state becomes (one's) true nature, one must seek the discovery of affairs by earnest striving, not by argument.<sup>89</sup>

**8. All of these matters must be learned so that you may know a little about yourself. The prize of the Way of Religion (*al-din*) for whoever does not come to know these is like husks, and he is deprived of the true nature [and the best part] of Religion.**

As mentioned before, *al-din* can be translated as “tradition” (not to be confused with the sayings and actions of the Prophet which are Tradition (*hadith*) with a capital T).

Al-Ghazzali uses the concept of the spiritual heart sometimes to mean “mind” and sometimes “emotion.” Its meaning depends upon the context. He discusses it using his three fundamentals: knowledge, states and deeds.

#### *KNOWLEDGE: THE HEART (SOUL)*

The spiritual heart al-Ghazzali points out has to be turned away from this world to the next.

The turning about of the soul itself is not more than one thing: that it turn from this world to the Hereafter; rather, that it turn from this world and the Hereafter to God Most High. The direction of the soul does not precede its desire and inclination. When the desire for this world gains mastery over the soul, it turns to this world. Its attachment to this world is its desire and it was so at the beginning of creation. When the wishes of God Most High and of seeing the Hereafter dominate, its nature changes and it turns toward another direction.<sup>90</sup>

The soundness of the heart according to al-Ghazzali is in its beings the loving friend of our innate nature.

<sup>88</sup> Alchemy, pp. 807, 808-9.

<sup>89</sup> Alchemy, p. 473.

<sup>90</sup> Alchemy, pp. 803-4.

Know that just as the soundness of the body, hands, feet, and eyes lies in that each one of them be able to do completely that for which it was created—that the eye see well and the foot walk well; so the soundness of the soul lies in that the special quality, which is its original nature and for which it was created, be easy for it, and that it be the loving friend of that which is in its original nature.<sup>91</sup>

Knowledge is acquired through our spiritual heart (mind). The spiritual heart is the seat of the Intellect, source of faith and object of God's sight. Reference to the "spiritual" heart in the Quran and *Sunnah* refers to that aspect of "self" which comes to know the meaning or nature of things as al-Ghazzali points out:

Therefore, that amount of power is useful that is the means of acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is (acquired) by the application of the soul, not the body, and the soul endures and is everlasting. When a savant departs from this world, the knowledge remains (with him). That knowledge is his light by which he sees the Divine Presence so as to obtain the pleasure (in comparison) to which all of the other pleasures of Paradise fall short. Knowledge has no dependency upon anything that will be voided at death, for neither wealth nor the hearts of people are attached to knowledge. Rather, it is the essence of God Most High, His attributes, His wisdom in the dominion and the kingdom, and the wonders of the probabilities in the possible, the necessary, and the impossible. For, they are timeless and eternal. They never change because the necessary never becomes impossible; nor the impossible, possible. However, knowledge that is connected with created, transitory things has no weight, such as, for example, the knowledge of language. For language is created and transitory, its weight is that it is the means of knowing the Book and the Practice (of the Prophet). Knowing the Book and the Practice is knowing God Most High and the cutting away of the obstacles on the path to Him.<sup>92</sup>

### *STATES: THE HEART (SOUL)*

...the heart has been so created that when an inclination or desire appears in it, when the body rises in agreement with that, that quality becomes more firmly and strongly established in the heart. For example, when mercy for

<sup>91</sup> Alchemy, p. 461.

<sup>92</sup> Alchemy, p. 597.

the orphan appears in the heart, if the hand is placed upon (the orphan's) head, that mercy grows stronger and the awareness of the heart increases. When the reality of humility appears, one acts humbly with the head too, and it approaches the ground. The intention of all acts of worship and the desire for the good is not that one turn to the world, but to the Hereafter.<sup>93</sup>

...God Most High is the nourishment of the soul, just as food is the nourishment of the body. A body from which the craving for food has departed or in which it has grown weak is sick. A soul from which the love for God Most High has departed, or in which it has grown weak, is sick. It is for this that God Most High said: *Say: If your fathers and your sons...* (Q. 9:24)<sup>94</sup>

Al-Ghazzali says that the defects of the heart can be recognized in four ways:

One is that one resort to an experienced and mature spiritual guide so that that spiritual guide may examine him and disclose the person's defects to him. In this era, this is unusual and rare.

The second is that one have a sympathetic friend watch over oneself, one who will not conceal one's defects out of flattery, nor magnify them out of envy. This, too, is rare. Dawud Tayi (R) was asked: "Why dost thou not associate and mix with people?" He replied: "What is the point of associating with a people who see my faults and conceal them from me?"

The third is that one listen to the talk of one's enemies about oneself, for the eye of the enemy always falls upon the faults. Even if he exaggerates out of his enmity, his words are still not devoid of truth.

The fourth is that one should study people. One should constantly be on the watch for any defect in oneself that one sees in someone else. One should suspect one's self, for it may be the same.<sup>95</sup>

### *DEEDS: HEART (SOUL)*

Therefore, the aim of all deeds is the turning of the soul. The aim of prostration is not that the forehead turn in order to touch from the air to the ground. Rather, it is that the nature of the soul turns from passion and arrogance to

<sup>93</sup> Alchemy, p. 803.

<sup>94</sup> Alchemy, p. 461-2.

<sup>95</sup> Alchemy, p. 462.

humility. The purpose of (uttering) *God is Greater* is not that the tongue twist and flick about. Rather, it is that the nature of the soul should turn from glorification of the self to the glorification of God Most High. The purpose of casting stones during the Greater Pilgrimage is not to increase the number of stones at a particular spot or to exercise the arm. Rather, is that the soul stand firm upon its servitude (of God) and abandon the pursuit of appetite and the control of one's own intellect, and become obedient to (God's) command. He removes the reins from his own hand and surrenders them to the hand of (God's) command. As he says: "*At Thy service, in proof of Truth, in worship and as a slave.*" The purpose of the sacrifice is not that a sheep be killed. Rather, it is that the foulness of miserliness depart from thy breast. Thou dost not have compassion for animals because of thy nature, but thou hast it because of the command (of God). When it is said: "Slaughter this sheep!" thou dost not say: "What has this wretch done? Why should I punish it?" Rather, thou abandonest thy self and, in truth, become non-existent. For, the servant (of God) is non-existent with respect to himself and he is truly intoxicated with God. All acts of worship are like this...<sup>96</sup>

Deeds (performed) with that intention become established and confirmed. Consequently, the deed is for the confirmation of the desire and the intention, even if it also comes from the intention. When it is so, it is obvious that intention is superior to the deed, for the intention itself is in the soul itself while the deed will flow from another place to the soul. If (the deed) does (this), it is useful, but if it does not, and it is done heedlessly, it is futile. The intention without the deed is this; it is not futile. This is just as if there were a pain in the stomach. When one takes medicine and it reaches (the belly), the object is attained. If one smears it on the chest so that its effect reaches it, it is also beneficial, but it would be better if it reached the stomach directly. The object of that ointment which touches the chest is not the chest but the stomach. It will necessarily be futile if it does not spread to the stomach. That which reaches the stomach, even though it does not reach the chest, will not be futile...<sup>97</sup>

ONE is to constantly repeat "God! God!" (*Allāh! Allāh!*), with the soul (*heart*), not with the tongue. Indeed, one should not (even) say it with the soul, for this uttering is like talking to oneself. Rather, one must be continually in a state of witnessing so as never to be inattentive. However, this is very impracticable and difficult. Not everyone has the strength for this—that one's soul have a single quality and a

<sup>96</sup> Alchemy, p. 803.

<sup>97</sup> Alchemy, p. 803-4.

single state—for people become bored with doing this. For this reason, many different private devotions have been posited. Some have a fixed form, such as formal prayer, and some are oral, such as reading the Quran and the Glorification; others are with the soul, such as meditation and reflection—lest one become bored. So, at every moment, there is something different to do; in the change from one state to another, there is a rest...<sup>98</sup>

Know that God Most High has a secret in the human soul. It is hidden in it just as fire in iron. When a stone is struck on iron, the secret (fire) is made manifest and plain. In the same way, listening to fine music and rhythmic song excites that essence of the soul. Something appears in it without a person's having any choice about it. The reason for this is the relationship that the essence of every human being has with the World of the Sublime: that which is called the world of spirits. The World of the Sublime is the world of excellence and beauty; the root of excellence and beauty is proportion. Whatever is in proportion gives proof of the beauty of that world. For, every beauty, excellence, and proportionality that is perceived in this world is all the fruit of the beauty, excellence and proportionality of that world.

Therefore, a sweet, rhythmic, proportioned song also has a resemblance to the marvels of that world. Because of this, awareness is awakened in the soul. A movement—a yearning—is born that the (listener) himself may not understand what it is. This is in a soul that is simple and devoid of being affected by passion and yearning. However, if it is not empty and is occupied with something, that with which it is occupied starts to move and brighten, as does a flame when it is breathed upon.

For the person whose soul has been conquered by the fire of the love of God Most High, music is important, for it makes that fire burn hotter. However, for anyone whose soul harbors love for the false, music is fatal poison for him and is forbidden to him.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Alchemy, p. 221.

<sup>99</sup> Alchemy, p. 392.

## EPILOGUE

Al-Ghazzali died on Monday the 14th of Jumādā Thānī AH505 (December 18, 1111), at the age of fifty-three. Margaret Smith in *Al-Ghazzali the Mystic* relates what took place on the days after his death according to his brother Ahmad.

At dawn of the day of his death, al-Ghazzali performed his ablutions and prayed and then said to his brother, "Bring me my shroud." and taking it, he kissed it and laid it over his eyes and said, "Most gladly do I enter into the Presence of the King," and he stretched out his feet and went forth to meet Him, and so passed into the Paradise of God, "worthy of all honor, of loftier station than the stars, giving more guidance to men than the full moon when darkness has fallen." He was buried outside Tus in a grave near that of the poet Firdousi. Ibn al-Samani records that he visited al-Ghazzali's grave there.

There is a story to the effect that when al-Ghazzali fell ill and felt that his death was approaching, he sent away those who were with him. No one entered his presence until the next morning when they went in as he had bidden them. They found him facing the qiblah, clad in his shroud, dead, and at his head they found a sheet of paper bearing these verses:

Say to my friends when they look upon me dead  
 Weeping for me and mourning me in sorrow  
 Do not believe that this corpse you see is myself.  
 In the Name of God I tell you it is not I  
 I am a spirit and this is nothing but flesh  
 It was my abode and my garment for a time.  
 I am a treasure, by a talisman kept hid,  
 Fashioned of dust which served me as a shrine.  
 I am a pearl which has left its shell deserted  
 It was my prison where I spent my time in grief.  
 I am a bird and this body was my cage  
 Whence I have now flown forth and it is left as a token,  
 Praise be to God Who has now set me free  
 And prepared for me my place in the highest of the heavens.  
 Now I live in truth with the grave-clothes discarded.  
 Today I hold converse with the saints above.  
 Now with no veil between I see God face to face  
 I look upon the Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*) and therein I read  
 Whatever was and is and all that is to be.  
 Let my house fall in ruins. Lay my cage in the ground.  
 Cast away the talisman. It is a token, no more.

Lay aside my cloak. It was but my outer garment.  
 Place them all in the grave. Let them be forgotten.  
 I have passed on my way and you are left behind.  
 Your place of abode was no dwelling-place for me.  
 Think not that death is death. Nay, it is life,  
 A life that surpasses all we could dream of here.  
 While in this world we are granted sleep.  
 Death is but sleep, a sleep that shall be prolonged.  
 Be not afraid when death draws near.  
 It is but the departure for this blessed home.  
 Think of the mercy and love of your Lord.  
 Give thanks for His Grace and come without fear.  
 What I am now even so shall you be  
 For I know that you are even as I am.  
 The souls of all people come forth from God.  
 The bodies of all are compounded alike.  
 Good and evil alike it was ours.  
 I give you now a message of good cheer.  
 May God's peace and joy for evermore be yours.

There were many elegies composed in honor of al-Ghazzali after his death. The most famous was that of the poet Abu'l-Muzaffer al-Abiwardi (d. 507/1113). Imam Ismail al-Hakimi also express his grief in lines taken from one of the most celebrated qasidas of Abu Tammam:

I wondered how to endure it when deprived of him by death.  
 I who shed tears of blood when he was away from me.  
 But these are times when so much seems strange  
 That we have ceased to wonder thereat.

One of al-Ghazzali's pupils, the well-known Sufi Abu'l Abbas al-Alishi composed verses in praise of both his teacher and his teacher's masterpiece, the *lhya*.

It is related that just after al-Ghazzali's death, Abu'l Abbas Ahmad ibn Abi al-Khayr al-Yamani, known as Sayyad, had a vision. He was sitting at the open gates of heaven and lo, a band of angels were descending to the earth bearing robes of honor, green in color, and with them a noble steed. They alighted at the head of a certain tomb and brought one forth from his grave. Having invested him with the robes, they set him on that steed and ascended with him to the heavens, continuing to ascend with him from one heaven to another until he had passed through all the seven heavens and ascending beyond them, he traversed the seventy veils. "I was filled with wonder at that," said Abu'l-Abbas, "and I desired to know who that rider was and I was told: 'It is al-Ghazzali,' and I did not know then that he had attained to martyrdom." It

is said that al-Ghazzali occupied the position of *qutb*, the supreme head of the mystical hierarchy.

It is also related that someone saw al-Ghazzali after his death in a dream and asked about his state. He replied, "If it were not for this strange knowledge, all would be well with us." His biographer is anxious that no one should imagine that this strange knowledge should be interpreted to mean the mystical knowledge of al-Ghazzali. This, he holds, would be a satanic device to prevent others from following in al-Ghazzali's steps and would mean that they were veiled from God and hindered from attaining to the highest degree of sainthood. He interprets the words to mean that since it was a celestial vision of one now in the Presence of God, no longer concerned with the things of sense, the strange knowledge was that which was concerned only with this world, with human affairs and relationships which could have no bearing whatever on life in the world to come, for death means separation from them. So perhaps al-Ghazzali regretted having concerned himself with worldly knowledge which was strange to the heavenly places. But his biographer points out that the knowledge of the mysteries of decoction and what belongs to the world to come could not be strange to one who had attained to that world. Therefore he urges his readers not to misinterpret these words lest they be hindered from seeking spiritual knowledge, but to acquire worldly knowledge only as much as was really necessary.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *Al-Ghazzali the Mystic*, pp. 36-38.



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# THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS

## GHAZZALI'S FOREWORD TO HIS BOOK

*In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate  
Thee do we ask for help*

Abundant gratitude and thanks, in the number of the stars in the sky, the droplets of the rain, the leaves of the trees, the grains of sand in the desert, and the particles of the earth and the sky, to that God Whose attribute is Oneness, and Whose special nature is Majesty and Grandeur, Greatness and Superiority, and Glory and Goodness. No created being is cognizant of the perfection of His Majesty. No one other than He may penetrate the true reality of His knowledge; indeed, the declaration of our inability to do so is the limit of the knowledge of the truly righteous.<sup>101</sup> The confession of (their) shortcomings in praising and appreciating Him is the furthest limit of the angels' and the prophets' appreciation of Him.

The farthest limit (achieved by) human reason through the principles of the Illumination<sup>102</sup> of His sublimity is bewilderment. The ultimate end of the journey of the wayfarers and disciples in their search for proximity to His awesome beauty is astonishment. Abandoning hope in the principle of (striving for) the knowledge of Him is the denial of His attributes<sup>103</sup> while the claim to a perfect knowledge of Him is the imagining of a similitude<sup>104</sup> and a likening.<sup>105</sup> The portion for all the eyes that would gaze upon the beauty of His essence is bedazzlement, and the fruit of the contemplation of the wonders of His creation to all intellects is necessary knowledge.

Let no one reflect upon the Nature and the What of the vastness of His essence! Let no heart neglect for one moment the wonders of His creation and (question) the nature and origin of His existence, so that one necessarily recognizes that all are the signs of His power and the lights of

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<sup>101</sup> "truly righteous": *siddiqān*.

<sup>102</sup> "Illumination" (*Ishrāq*): Probably a jab at the Neoplatonic philosophy of Illuminism (*Ishrāq*) which Ghazzali rejected.

<sup>103</sup> "denial of His attributes" (*ta'til*): a theological concept denying God all attributes.

<sup>104</sup> "similitude" (*tashbih*) which, theologically, is the anthropomorphization of God. (Wehr)

<sup>105</sup> "likening" (*tamthil*): the root meaning is: "to resemble, to look like, to appear in the likeness of," and a derivative is used in the Quran with the English equivalent of "similitudes."

His grandeur. All these are the inventions and marvels of His wisdom. All are the rays of the beauty of His presence. All are His; indeed, the existence of all things is (but) a ray of the light of His existence.

Praise be to Muhammad the Chosen One, upon whom be the peace and blessings of God, who is the lord of the prophets and the guide and the way for the believers. He is the trustee of the secrets of divinity, chosen and selected by the Divine Presence; and (praise be) to his helpers and the people of his house, each one of whom is a model for the nation and a discloser of the Way of the Religious Law.

Now, know that mankind was not created frivolously or upon a whim; instead, his role is grand and his peril is great. Though man is not eternal and does not live forever, though his body is earth and clay, the truth of his soul is exalted and divine. His essence—though it is mixed and permeated in the beginning with bestial, wild, and devilish characteristics—is cleansed of these impurities and becomes fit for the Divine Presence when he strives to repent.

From the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, all the dips and rises are (man's) work. The lowest of the low is he who descends to the level of beasts, ferocious animals, and devils. He is the prisoner of his carnal appetite and anger. The highest of the high is he who attains the level of the angels and is liberated from his carnal appetite and anger. Both of them (appetite and anger) become his prisoners and he their ruler. When he attains such sovereignty, he becomes worthy of service to the Divine Presence, and such worthiness is the attribute of the angels and the perfection of the state of man. When he enjoys the pleasure of the beauty of the Divine Presence, he will not be able to withhold himself from its contemplation for one moment. Gazing upon that beauty becomes his heaven. That “heaven” which is the result of the appetite of the eyes, the genitals, and the stomach will be abridged for him.

Since the essence of man is, at the outset of creation, deficient and base, it is not possible for him to attain the stage of perfection from this deficiency without strenuous effort and treatment.

#### EXCURSUS: (ABOUT ALCHEMY)

Just as that alchemy<sup>106</sup> that transforms copper and bronze to the purity and beauty of pure gold is difficult and not known by everyone; so

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<sup>106</sup> “Alchemy” (*kīmiyā*): This word which, in Arabic, was a loan word from the Greek *chemēia*, itself meaning ‘alchemy’ rather than our modern concept of ‘chemistry’ which was also derived from it, albeit, through ‘alchemy.’ The first syllable *al* is the Arabic definite article ('the') and shows that the English word came not directly from the Greek, but by way of Arabic *al-kīmiyā* (through Latin). While in English, alchemy refers to the process of converting base metal into something more valuable, usually gold, in Arabic

too the alchemy that will transform the essence of man from his baseness and bestiality to the purity and preciousness of the angelic state in order to achieve everlasting happiness is also difficult and not known by all. The purpose of this book is to describe the compounding of this alchemy which, in truth, is the alchemy of eternal (spiritual) happiness. With this in mind, I have named this book *The Alchemy of Happiness*.

The noun *Alchemy* is preferred because the difference between copper and gold lies not in yellowness and the reward of this alchemy is nothing more than (mere) wealth in this world. How long does this world itself last? How great is the difference between bestial and angelic attributes, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high? But, the fruit of this *Alchemy of Happiness* is eternal; there is no limit to it! Its varieties of pleasure have no end, nor shall any annoyance tarnish its pleasure.

Know that the philosopher's stone<sup>107</sup> (of the alchemist) is not to be found in any old woman's cupboard; rather it is found in the treasury of kings. So, too, the alchemy of happiness is not everywhere; it is in the Divine Treasury. And the Treasury of God is the essence of the angels in the heavens and the hearts of the prophets on earth. So, whoever, other than the noble prophets, seeks to achieve this alchemy is in error. In the season of the Resurrection, his insolvency will be disclosed and his false coinage made public. His imaginings will disgrace him, and it will be said to him: *Now We have removed from thee thy covering and piercing is thy sight this day.* (Q 50:22)

Of the greatest of the mercies of God Most High, one is that He sent 124,000 prophets to mankind for this purpose: to teach them the formula of this alchemy and to inform them how to place the soul (*dil*) in the crucible of striving, and how to cleanse from it the immoral characteristics from which come the wickedness and tarnishing of the soul, and how to draw the praiseworthy attributes to it. It was for this, as God Most High himself gloried in His Own sovereignty and purity, that He further glorified (Himself) by sending the prophets, may God bless them all. And He tasked them, saying:

*All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth glorifieth God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Mighty, the Wise. It is He Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to purify them, and to teach them*

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*kimiyā* refers both to the process and the mysterious substance called the lodestone or philosopher's stone which was thought to be the agent of this transformation. Hence, Ghazzali uses the word in both meanings: it is a process *and* it is also a coveted substance, the vain search for which in medieval laboratories throughout the East and West ultimately gave birth to the science of modern chemistry.

<sup>107</sup> "philosopher's stone": also *kimiyā*.

*the Book and Wisdom, though before (this) they were indeed in manifest error.* (Q. 62:1-2)

This purifying them is to cleanse them of the unbecoming traits that are the attributes of brutish beasts. *Teaching them the Book and Wisdom* is that mankind be clothed in the raiment of angelic attributes.

The object of this alchemy is to strip away all that should not be (the attributes of deficiency); and to adorn (a person) with what should be (the attributes of perfection). The secret of this alchemy is that one must turn away from this world and bring oneself to God Most High, as He first taught the Prophet (S), saying: *Remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him, a great devotion.* (Q. 73:8) The meaning of *devotion* is to cut oneself off from all else and give one's self to Him in its entirety.

In short, this alchemy is that, but its explanation is lengthy.

## THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK

As for (the *Alchemy's*) Prolegomena,<sup>108</sup> it is about the knowledge of four things; and its Pillars<sup>109</sup> are the four forms of conduct. For each Pillar, there are ten Chapters, as is found in the Contents: four Topics, four Pillars, and (each Pillar having) ten Chapters. [All of this book and its contents are what has been cited, *should God Most High will it!*]

## THE PROLEGOMENA ON BEING A MUSLIM

The First Topic: That is to know the true nature of oneself.

The Second Topic: That is to know God.

The Third Topic: That is to know the true nature of the world.

The Fourth Topic: That is to know the true nature of the afterlife.  
[And these four studies are in fact (the knowledge of) being a Muslim.]

## THE (FOUR) PILLARS OF BEING A MUSLIM

These Pillars of Being a Muslim are [divided into] four: Two concerning externals, and two concerning internals. The two Pillars concerning externals are: the First Pillar, the execution of God's commandments, and this is called the *Acts of Worship*. The Second Pillar

<sup>108</sup> Prolegomena (*‘unwān*): In modern Persian, *‘unwān* (pronounced *unvān*) usually refers to address or title. Constrained with a verb such as *kurdan* (to do), it can mean to bring up a matter or a topic. In Arabic, it can also mean a model, epitome, token, etc. Ghazzali appears to be using the word as a classification and for this reason has been translated here as “topic.” The four topics, taken together, constitute the Prolegomena.

<sup>109</sup> “Pillar”: *rukū*, pl. *arkān*.

is about observing proprieties in movement and rest and in social intercourse, which is called *Mutual Relations*.

As for the two Pillars concerning internals, the first [the Third Pillar] is about the cleansing of the heart of immoral traits, such as anger, miserliness, envy, pride, and conceit. These traits are called the Destroyers and obstacles on the road of faith. The other Pillar [the Fourth Pillar] is the adornment of the heart with desirable traits, such as patience, gratitude, love, hope, and trust (in God). They are called the Deliverers.

**THE FIRST PILLAR IS ABOUT THE ACTS OF WORSHIP AND HAS TEN CHAPTERS.** The first chapter: making right the beliefs of the orthodox<sup>110</sup> and the congregation; the second chapter: engaging in the search for knowledge; the third chapter: concerning purification; the fourth chapter: concerning performing formal prayer; the fifth chapter: concerning the poor rate; the sixth chapter: concerning fasting; the seventh chapter: concerning performing the greater Pilgrimage; the eighth chapter: concerning the recitation of the Quran; the ninth chapter: concerning the Remembrance of God and Glorifying Him; and the tenth chapter: observing the formulae and the times of worship<sup>111</sup> correctly.

**THE SECOND PILLAR IS ABOUT MUTUAL RELATIONS AND ALSO HAS TEN CHAPTERS.** The first chapter: the rules of eating; the second chapter: the rules of marriage; the third chapter: the rules of business and trade; the fourth chapter: concerning seeking the lawful; the fifth chapter: the rules of social intercourse; the sixth chapter: the rules of seclusion; the seventh chapter: the rules of travel; the eighth chapter: the rules of the whirling dance; and ecstasy; the ninth chapter: the rules of enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad; and the tenth chapter: the rules of governing.

**THE THIRD PILLAR IS ABOUT OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES ON THE ROAD OF FAITH, WHICH ARE CALLED THE DESTROYERS, AND ALSO HAS TEN CHAPTERS.** The first chapter: concerning the disclosure of the discipline of the self, the treatment for bad character, and the obtaining of a good character; the second chapter: concerning the appetites of the stomach and the genitalia; the third chapter: concerning the remedy for bad language and the calamities (resulting from) speech; the fourth chapter: concerning treating the diseases of anger, hatred, and envy; the fifth chapter: concerning the love of this world and the sickness of greed; the sixth chapter: concerning the

<sup>110</sup> "orthodox": *ahl-i sunnat*.

<sup>111</sup> See Chapter Ten of the First Pillar and Note 625.

treatment of stinginess and avarice for the accumulation of wealth; the seventh chapter: concerning the treatment of the love for high rank and pomp and its evils; the eighth chapter: concerning the treatment of hypocrisy and sowing discord in worship; the ninth chapter: concerning the treatment of arrogance and conceit; and the tenth chapter: concerning the treatment of heedlessness, error, and pride.

**THE FOURTH PILLAR IS ABOUT THE DELIVERERS AND ALSO HAS TEN CHAPTERS.** The first chapter: concerning repentance and emerging from darkness; the second chapter: concerning patience and thankfulness; the third chapter: concerning fear and hope; the fourth chapter: concerning dervishhood and asceticism; the fifth chapter: concerning truthfulness and sincerity; the sixth chapter: concerning reckoning and guarding; the seventh chapter: concerning meditation; the eighth chapter: concerning (Divine) Unity and trust (in God); the ninth chapter: concerning love and zeal; and the tenth chapter: concerning the remembrance of death.

In this work, we explain these four topics and the forty points for Persian speakers. We have refrained from penning long, abstruse phrases and fine, difficult distinctions so that the general public may comprehend it. Should a person have the desire for more detailed and refined information about this, he must consult books in Arabic, such as *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, *The Essentials of the Quran*,<sup>112</sup> and other works that we have written about these matters in Arabic. The object of this book is the general public, who have cried for such a book in Persian. The level of discourse must not exceed their ability to understand.

May God Most High purify their intention in their earnest request and our intention in complying with it. May He [bless us with favor and] keep it pure from the pitfalls of hypocrisy and the offense of dissimulation. May He open wide the hope of His mercy and the right path. May He grant facility and success so that that which is said becomes faithful to behavior, for words without action are a waste and declaring without practicing will be a cause of trouble in the Hereafter. *We seek refuge with God from that.*<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *The Essentials (or Jewels) of the Quran (Jawāhir al-Qur'ān)*: In his list of 72 works of Ghazzali, HK places this work at No. 37 between *The Revival* (No. 28) and *The Alchemy* (No. 45).

<sup>113</sup> Instead of: *We seek refuge with God from that*, AA has: *Verily, He is the Lord of Compliance.*

# THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK DISCLOSING THE PROLEGOMENA TO BEING A MUSLIM

## THE FIRST TOPIC: CONCERNING KNOWING ONESELF

Know that the key to the knowledge of God, may He be honored and glorified, is knowledge of one's own self. For this it has been said: *He who knows himself knows his Lord.* And it is for this that the Creator Most High said: *We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves, so that it will become evident to them that it is the Truth.* (Q. 41:53) He said: We show them Our signs in the universe and in (their) selves so that the true nature of the Truth may become revealed to them.

In a word, there is nothing closer thee than thou.<sup>114</sup> If thou knowest not thyself, how canst thou know anything else? Indeed, if thou sayest thou knowest thyself, thou art in grievous error! Thou knowest nothing more about thyself than thy head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and external skin! All thou knowest about thine insides is that when thou art hungry thou must eat; when thou anger, thou fightest; when (sexual) appetite overcomes thee, thou seekest to copulate. In this, thou art the equal of the beasts of burden!

Therefore, thou must seek out the truth about thyself: What sort of a thing art thou? Whence camest thou? Whither goest thou? Why hast thou come to this stopping place?<sup>115</sup> For what purpose wert thou created? What is thy happiness and in what does it lie? What is thy misery and in what does that lie?

As for those attributes that are gathered inside thee: some are the attributes of beasts of burden, some are the attributes of fierce animals, some are the attributes of demons, and some are the attributes of the angels. Which of these art thou? Which is the truth of thine essential nature, while the others are foreign and borrowed? If thou dost not know this, thou canst not seek thine own happiness, because for each of these there is a different nutriment and a different happiness.

For the beasts of burden, their nutriment and their happiness is in eating, sleeping, and copulating. If thou art of their kind, thou triest to satisfy thy stomach and thy genitalia night and day. As for ferocious beasts, their nutriment and their happiness is in giving free rein to tearing

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<sup>114</sup> The reader himself is being addressed (*tū* = thou).

<sup>115</sup> "this stopping place" (*manzil-gāh*): this world.

apart, killing, and rage. The nutriment of demons is the encouragement of evil, treachery, and deceit. If thou art of them, busy thyself in their activities and attain thine ease and good fortune!

As for the angels, their nutriment and their happiness is the contemplation of the Divine Presence. They are immune from the appetite, anger and the attributes of the beasts and predators. If thou hast the angelic essence in thy nature, strive to come to know the Divine Presence and open thyself to the contemplation of Its Beauty. Liberate thyself from the grip of carnal appetite and rage. Strive until thou dost understand the reason for the creation of these bestial traits within thee. Were they created to capture thee, to carry thee into service of the self, and to enslave thee in forced labor, day and night? Thou must capture them before they capture thee! Thou (must) make of one thy vehicle and of the other thy weapon for the journey that has been put before thee. Use them in these few days that we are in this stopping place to hunt, with their aid, the seed of thine own (spiritual) happiness.

When thou hast obtained that seed of happiness, place those (those tools) underfoot and turn thy face to the resting place) of thine own (spiritual) happiness, that resting place for which the elite expression is “the Divine Presence”<sup>116</sup> and for which the common expression is “Paradise.”

All of these matters must be learned so that thou may know a little about thyself. The prize of the Way of Religion for whoever does not come to know these is an (empty) shell, and he is deprived of the true nature [and the best part]<sup>117</sup> of Religion.

## 1. THE OUTER FORM AND THE INNER SPIRIT

If thou desirest to know thyself, know that thou wert created of two things. One is the external form that is called the body and is visible to the eye; the other is the internal spirit that is called the self (*nafs*),<sup>118</sup> the vital principle (*jān*),<sup>119</sup> or the soul (*dil*).<sup>120</sup> It may be known by means of inner vision, but it cannot be seen by the external eye.

<sup>116</sup> “the Divine Presence” (*hadrat-i ulūhiyat*): literally, the presence of the Godhead.

<sup>117</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>118</sup> “self” (*nafs*): Though it can mean soul or spirit, it is more often used in philosophy to represent the perishable aspect of our spiritual being. It represents our individuality and inclinations, something like the modern ideas of self and ego. The various terms Ghazzali uses for aspects of the soul are inserted into the text throughout the Prolegomena only.

<sup>119</sup> “vital principle” (*jān*): Life. The animating spirit which vanishes at death. It also contains meanings of soul and feeling, a Persian rough equivalent of Arabic *nafs*.

<sup>120</sup> *Dil*: literally “heart.” As in English, “heart” can refer to the center of abstract feeling and also to the physical organ in our chests. In addition to using it in these senses, Ghazzali also uses it as the Persian equivalent of Arabic *rūh*, meaning the eternal aspect of our spirituality: the soul.

Thy true nature<sup>121</sup> lies in that internal spirit. Everything else other than that is its follower, its army, and its servant. We call it the soul (*dil*). When we speak of this soul, know that we refer to that true nature which is also sometimes called the (eternal) spirit (*rūh*)<sup>122</sup> and at other times the self (*nafs*). We are referring to this “soul,” not to the lump of flesh<sup>123</sup> that is found in the left side of the chest. It has no special merit and is possessed also by the beasts, the dead, and can be seen by the external eye. Everything that can be seen by the eye is of this world, called “the visible world.”<sup>124</sup>

The true nature of the soul is not of this world. It has come to this world as a stranger and a wayfarer. The external flesh is its vehicle and tool, and all the limbs and organs of the body are its soldiers. It is the monarch of the entire body. (Spiritual) knowledge of God Most High and the witnessing the beauty of His Presence are its attributes. It has the burden of duty, it is addressed, and it is chastised and punished. Unalloyed happiness and misery are its (lot). In all of this, the body is its follower. Knowledge of its true nature and its attributes is the key to spiritual knowledge of God Most High.

Strive to get to know it, for it is a precious jewel, of the essence of the angels. Its real source<sup>125</sup> is the Divine Presence, whence it has come and whither it shall return. It has come here as a visitor to trade and sow. After this, thou wilt come to understand the meaning of this “trading and sowing,” *God willing*.

## 2. KNOWING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SOUL

Know that knowledge of the true nature of the soul is not acquired until thou recognize its existence. After that, thou comest to know what its true nature is. Then, thou comest to know how many its armies are. Then, thou comest to know its relationship to those armies. Then, thou comest to know its character: how it obtains the knowledge of God Most High and how it obtains its own (spiritual) happiness. Each one of these will be discussed.

Now, (the soul’s) existence is obvious; for a person has no doubt about the existence of himself. One’s existence does not lie in the visible body; a corpse possesses the same, but it does not have life.

When we speak of this soul (*dil*), we mean the true nature of the eternal spirit (*rūh*). If there is no soul, the body is a corpse. If a person closes his eyes and forgets about his body and forgets the heavens and

<sup>121</sup> “true nature”: *haqīqat*.

<sup>122</sup> See Notes 118, 119, and 120.

<sup>123</sup> That is, the physical heart.

<sup>124</sup> Or “world of witnessing” (*ālam-i shahādat*).

<sup>125</sup> “source” (*ma‘dan*): literally “mine, quarry.”

the earth and all else that the external eye can see, he will come to know his own existence out of necessity and become aware of himself, even though he is unaware of his form and the earth and the sky and all that is in them.<sup>126</sup> When a person reflects well upon this, he will come to know something of the afterlife. He will perceive that his physical shape will be taken away from him, yet he will remain in place and not be annihilated.

### 3. THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SOUL

As for the true nature of the soul, that is, what sort of thing it is and what its special attributes are, the Religious Law<sup>127</sup> has given no leniency. It was for this reason that the Prophet (S) did not expound (upon it). As God Most High said: *They will ask thee concerning the soul. Say: The soul is by the command of my Lord...* (Q. 17:85) He received (in revelation) no more (about this), other than to say: "The soul is one of the Divine works and is of the world of command, and has come from that world: *Surely His is the creation and the command.* (Q. 7:54)

The world of creation is one thing and the world of command, another. Everything that is affected by linear measurement, amount, and quantity is called the "World of Creation",<sup>128</sup> for, the root meaning of "creation" is "calculation, estimation." The human soul has neither amount nor quantity, and for this reason it cannot be divided. If it were divisible, then it would be lawful for one side of it to be ignorant of something, while the other side would have knowledge of that same thing. At the same time, a person could be both knowledgeable and ignorant. Such a thing would be impossible!

But this "spirit" (*rūh*), with its indivisibility and its not being affected by dimensions, is created. "Creation" is also called "creating."<sup>129</sup> Thus, in this sense, (the soul) is of the world of creation; but in another, it is of the world of command, not of the created (substantial) world; for the world of command consists of things not occupying space or having dimensions.

So, persons who supposed that the soul is eternally pre-existent<sup>130</sup> are mistaken. And persons who said that it is accidental are also wrong, for something accidental cannot establish itself; it is a consequence. The vital principle (*jān*) is the essence of a person, and all form is subject to it. How can it be a consequence?

<sup>126</sup> i.e., an experiment in sensory deprivation.

<sup>127</sup> "Religious Law": *Shari'at*.

<sup>128</sup> "World of Creation" ("ālam-i khalq): that is, Divine fiat.

<sup>129</sup> Ghazzali is giving the Persian equivalent (*āfarīdan*) of the Arabic *khalq*.

<sup>130</sup> "eternally pre-existent" (*qadim*): that is, coeval with God.

Persons who said that it is physical have also made a mistake, for the physical may be divided, but the soul cannot be divided. However, there is something else called the “animating spirit” (*rūh*)<sup>131</sup> which is divisible and which even the animals possess. But, the spirit that we call the “soul” (*dil*) is the seat of the knowledge of God Most High. Beasts do not have this. It is neither a physical body nor an accident; rather, it is an essence from the essence of the angels, and its true nature is very difficult to comprehend. It is not permissible to expand (upon this).

[This spiritual knowledge]<sup>132</sup> is not needed at the beginning for traveling the way of religion. The beginning of the way of religion is, rather, earnest striving.<sup>133</sup> If a person makes this earnest striving a prerequisite, this spiritual knowledge will come to him of itself, without hearing it from anyone else. This spiritual knowledge is one of the gifts about which God, may He be honored and glorified, said: *As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our paths.* (Q. 29:69)

It is not proper to speak about the reality of the soul with anyone who has not yet completed his earning striving. But before that striving, he must first get to know the army of the soul. Without this, a person cannot strive.

#### 4. THE SOUL, THE MONARCH OF THE BODY

Know that the body is the kingdom of the soul, and in this kingdom, the soul possesses various armies: *No one knows the hosts of thy Lord save Him.* (Q. 74:31) The created soul was created for the Hereafter. Its work is the seeking of happiness; and its happiness is in the spiritual knowledge of God Most High. It acquires this knowledge of God Most High through the knowledge of His handiwork, and this is the totality of the universe. It learns about the wonders of the universe by means of the senses, and these senses are established in the body.

Thus, knowledge is (the soul’s) prey; the senses are its net. The physical body is its vehicle and the bearer of its net. As a result, it is for this reason that a person needs a body. His body is a vehicle made from water, earth, heat, and moisture.<sup>134</sup> For this reason he is weak and in danger of destruction from within because of hunger and thirst, and from without because of fire, water, being the prey of enemies and beasts, and the like.

<sup>131</sup> Here Ghazzali is making a distinction between *dil* and *rūh*. *Dil* is the eternal imperishable soul while *rūh* is the animating spirit which humans share with other creatures. The Arabic root of *rūh* (*r-w-h*) implies going, motion. The word for “wind” (*rīh*) has the same root. *Rūh* can mean “spirit” in all senses: eternal or tied to life.

<sup>132</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>133</sup> “earnest striving”: *mujāhadat*.

<sup>134</sup> The four classical elements, moisture being substituted for air.

Consequently, because of hunger and thirst, he requires food and drink. For these purposes, he needs two armies: one external, as the hands, feet, mouth, teeth, and stomach; and another internal, as appetite and anger. But, as it is not possible for a person to seek nourishment he cannot perceive, or defend himself from enemies he cannot perceive, he falls into the need of the powers of perception. Some of these are external and they are the five senses: the nose, the eyes, the ears, taste, and touch.

However, some also are internal, and they are also five in number. They are located in the brain: the power of imagination, the power of thought, the power of memory, the power of recall, and the power of conjecture. Each one of these powers has a special task. Should one of them become flawed, a person's functions will be flawed, in both worldly and religious affairs.

All of these armies, external and internal, are at the command of the soul (*dil*) which is the commander and the king of them all. When it orders the tongue, it commences to speak, as it orders the hand to seize, the foot to walk, and the eye to look. When it commands the power of thought, he thinks. They are all made to blindly obey its orders so that the body may be preserved and it may satisfy its requirements and achieve its objectives. It completes the enterprise of the Hereafter and sows the seeds of its own happiness. The obedience of these armies to the soul resembles the obedience of the angels to God Most High. They cannot oppose any command; rather they obey naturally and willingly.

## 5. THE ARMIES OF THE SOUL

Coming to know the details of the armies of the soul is lengthy, but their purposes may be made known to thee by examples. Know that the metaphor of the body is a nation and its limbs and organs are its workers. Carnal appetite<sup>135</sup> is the tax collector, anger is the policeman, and the soul (*dil*) is the king. Reason, is the king's chief minister. The king needs all of these in order to rule his kingdom properly.

But the carnal appetite—the tax collector—is a liar, a babbler, and a confounder. It opposes whatever Chief Minister Reason says. It always desires to confiscate whatever wealth there is in the kingdom under the pretext of taxation. And this anger, the policeman of the state, is wicked and very hot-tempered. It always loves killing, breaking, and overthrowing.

Accordingly, if the king of the land were always to consult the minister of reason, ignore the lying and greedy tax collector and not give ear to whatever he says in opposition to that minister; and (if he were to)

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<sup>135</sup> "carnal appetite": *shahwat*.

set the policeman, while keeping him tightly under control and preventing him from excess, over the tax collector so that he would not be able to create confusion; then the kingdom would be well-ordered.

In the same way, should King Soul act at the advice of Minister Intellect, and keep appetite and anger under tight control and in obedience to reason, then he will not be mastered by them; nor will the highway to (spiritual) happiness and reaching the Divine Presence be cut off to him. But, should reason become the prisoner of appetite and anger, then the kingdom will be desolate, and the king will become wretched and destroyed.

## 6. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE SOUL

From what has been said, thou hast learned that carnal appetite and anger have been created for the nourishment and preservation of the body. Therefore, these two are the servants of the body and food and drink are the fodder of the body. The body has been created in order to bear the senses; therefore, the body is the servant of the senses. The senses have been created for the intelligence gathering of the intellect, in order to serve as its net so that it may know of the handiwork of God Most High.

Accordingly, the senses are the servant of the intellect, and the intellect has been created for the soul, to be its candle and lamp. By its light, the soul may see the Divine Presence which is its Paradise. Thus, the intellect is the servant of the soul, and the soul has been created to witness the beauty of Presence of God's Dominion. When acting in this role, (the soul) becomes the slave and servant of the Divine Presence and that which God said: *I created the jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me* (Q. 51:56), refers to this.

For this reason the soul was created and given its kingdom and its armies. The vehicle of the body was given over in charge to it so that it might journey from the world of dust to the Highest of the High. If it wishes to show gratitude for this blessing and fulfill this obligation of service, it must sit like a monarch in the center of the kingdom and make the Divine Presence its prayer-direction and goal. (It must) make the Hereafter its homeland and resting place. It must make a way station of the world and a conveyance of the body. It must make servants of the limbs and organs and a minister of the intellect. It must make the overseer of property of the carnal appetite and the policeman of anger.

(The soul) makes of the senses its spies, each one responsible for a different sphere in order to collect the information of that sphere. It makes the power of imagination, which is in the front of the brain, the master of the post and those spies will deposit their information with it. It makes the power of memory, which is in the back of the brain, their mailbag and repository. At the appropriate time, the information will be

presented to Minister Intellect. The minister, according to the information he receives from the kingdom, will arrange its affairs and the journeys of the king. He takes the necessary steps if he finds that one of the armies, such as appetite or anger, etc., is in rebellion against the king and has acted in disobedience, intending to attack him.

However, the minister does not seek to kill the rebel, for the kingdom could not be ruled without him. Instead, he arranges to bring the rebel back within the boundaries of obedience. In that way, the rebel becomes a helper, not an enemy, in the journey that lies ahead. He becomes a friend, not a thief or a bandit. If (the tamed rebel) does this, he will be happy and grateful. He will receive a robe of honor in due time. But, if he disobeys and rises in support of bandits and enemies in rebellion, then he is ungrateful and vicious, and he receives chastisement and punishment.

## 7. THE ROOTS OF GOOD AND BAD IN A HUMAN BEING

Know that there is a connection between the soul and each of these armies that are inside a person. Each one gives him some quality or trait. Some of these are bad and bring him to ruin, while others are good and bring him happiness.

Though the number of these qualities is great, they may be grouped into four types: bestial, predatory, devilish, and angelic. Because carnal appetite and avarice have been placed in one, he does beastly things, such as excess in eating and copulation. Because anger has been placed in him, he behaves like dogs, wolves, and lions—beating, killing, and falling upon people with the violence of fist and tongue. Because deceit, treachery, hypocrisy, fraud, and sowing public discord have been placed in him, he does the work of demons. Because reason has been placed in him, he does the work of angels, such as loving knowledge and morality, abstaining from reprehensible acts, striving for goodness among people, keeping himself above miserliness, rejoicing in the knowledge of affairs, and considering ignorance and foolishness a defect.

Thou mayest say that in truth there are four things inside the skin of each human being: a dog, a pig, a demon, and an angel. The dog is blameworthy and reproachable, not because of its limbs or skin; rather because of the innate nature that makes it attack people. The pig is not despised because of its appearance; rather, it is because of its excessive avidity, greed, and avarice for filthy and repulsive things. In reality, a canine or porcine soul means this, and it is the same with man. The true devilish and angelic natures of these qualities are in the same manner as we have noted above.

A human being is commanded to reveal the fraud and deceit of Satan by means of the radiance of the intellect—one of the effects of the lights of the angels—so that (Satan) may be abased and unable to sow

any discord. As the Prophet (S) said: "There is a devil for every person, even one for me; but God Most High has given me victory over him and made him my conquest. He cannot command any evil."

(Man) has also been told that he must discipline this pig of greed and carnality and the dog of anger. He must bring them under control of the intellect so that they neither rise nor sit except at its command. If he does this, he will obtain the good qualities and traits that are the seeds of his (spiritual) happiness.

But, should he do other than this, and gird his loins in their service, bad qualities will appear in him, which become the seeds of his wretchedness. If his state be revealed to him, for example, in sleep or wakefulness, he finds himself in the service of a pig, a dog, or a demon. It is well known what the fate (in the Hereafter) of a person who hands over a Muslim to be the prisoner of an unbeliever would be. Consider, then, how much worse would be the condition of him who hands over an angel as a prisoner to dogs, pigs, and demons!

Most people, if they be honest and take account, are day and night in the service of their own selves' desires and passions. That is their condition, even though they are in the form of humans. Tomorrow at the Resurrection, these qualities will be revealed, and their forms will correspond to their natures. On that day, that person whose appetite and greed had dominated him will be seen in the form of a pig. That person, whose anger had dominated him, will be seen in the form of wolf.

It is for this that the interpretation for a person who sees a wolf in a dream is that he is a tyrannical person. If he sees a pig in a dream, the interpretation is that he is an impure man. This is because sleep is the proof-giver of death, insofar as one is further from the world because of sleep. Form follows nature, so that every one is seen in the same form that is inside him. This is a great mystery that is not possible to explain in this book.

## 8. GUARDING ONE'S ACTIVITIES AND RESTS

Now that thou hast learned that these four valiant warriors and overseers are within thee, observe thy conduct and rests as to which of these four thou dost obey. Recognize truly that from every move thou makest, a trait is acquired by the soul that remains with thee and accompanies thee to (the next) world. These traits are called "morals." And all morals spring from these four warriors.

If thou submit to the pig of appetite, the attributes of foulness, shamelessness, greed, sycophancy, [hypocrisy,]<sup>136</sup> niggardliness, greed, rejoicing in the misfortunes of others, envy, etc. will appear in thee. But

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<sup>136</sup> From the AA text.

if thou dost master it and control it with discipline, [intelligence, and the Religious Law];<sup>137</sup> then the attributes of contentment, self-restraint, modesty, peace, delicacy, piety, moderation, disinterest, and moderation will appear in thee.

If thou submit to the dog of anger, the attributes of rashness, impurity,<sup>138</sup> boastfulness, flaunting, treachery, self-importance, oppression, scorn, demeaning others, and assaulting people will appear in thee. But, if thou master and control this dog with discipline, patience, endurance, forgiveness, firmness, courage, repose, boldness, and generosity will appear in thou.

If thou submit to that Satan, whose work it is to arouse and encourage the pig and the dog and to teach them trickery and deceit; then the attributes of deceptiveness, treachery, fraud, mean spiritedness, trickery, and adulteration will appear in thee. But if thou overcome him and are not deceived by his hypocrisy, if thou give victory to the army of reason; then astuteness, spiritual knowledge, learning, wisdom, rectitude, good character, greatness, and leadership will appear in thee. And if these good attributes stay with thee, they will be among thy lasting good deeds<sup>139</sup> and the seeds of thy happiness.

Those deeds from which bad characteristics arise are called “sins,” and those from which good characteristics arise are called “devotion<sup>140</sup> (to God).” The activities and rests of a person are not devoid of these two.

The soul (*dil*) is like a bright mirror; repugnant traits are like smoke and darkness which, when they touch it, darken it so that tomorrow<sup>141</sup> one will not see the Divine Presence and it will become veiled (to one’s view). Good traits are the light that reaches the soul and wipes away the darkness of sin. It is for this that the Prophet (S) said: “Follow a bad deed with a good (deed) so that (the bad) may be erased.” At the Resurrection, it may be that the soul comes to a desert, either bright or dark. (*None will be saved except him who comes to God with a sound heart.* (Q. 26:89)<sup>142</sup>

<sup>137</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>138</sup> “impurity” (*nāpākī*): following AA. HK reads *nābākī*, “fearlessness,” which seems to repeat the previous “rashness” (*tahawwur*). Impurity is associated with dogs.

<sup>139</sup> “lasting good deeds”: *bāqiyāt-i sālihāt*.

<sup>140</sup> Or “obedience.”

<sup>141</sup> “tomorrow” (*fardā*): the Hereafter; the Day of Resurrection.

<sup>142</sup> “except him who comes to God with a sound heart” (Q. 26:89): Both HK and AA record this verse with a preceding Arabic phrase *wa lā yanjū*—“and he will not be saved” or “none will be saved”—as though it were part of the verse (both editions use bold type for Arabic and Quranic quotations). This phrase does not occur in any copy of the Quran I have checked. Hence, while translating it, I have removed it from the format we are using to distinguish citations from the Quran. It is possibly a misreading of the last word of the preceding verse *wa lā banūn*—“nor sons”—which it resembles in Arabic

A person's soul, at the beginning of its creation, is like (raw) iron from which—if a person keeps it as he should—is made a shining mirror that displays the entire universe. If not, it will all rust and become so that nothing will be reflected in it. As God Most High said: *Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their souls.* (Q. 83:14)

## 9. THE ORIGIN OF A HUMAN BEING IS OF THE ESSENCE OF ANGELS

Now thou wilt say: "Since in man there are the attributes of beasts of prey, other animals, devils, and angels; how do we know that his origin lies in the essence of the angels, and that the others are foreign [and accidental]?"<sup>143</sup> How do we know that he has been created for angelicness and the moral nature (of the angels), so that he may acquire that, and not for the other (non-angelic) traits? Know that thou recognizest this because thou knowest that a human being is nobler and more perfect than animals and savage beasts. Everything to which perfection may have been given, which is his final stage, is the reason for his having been created.

For example: The horse is nobler than the donkey because the donkey was created to carry burdens, while the horse (was created) for running, warfare, and wars of faith,<sup>144</sup> so that it runs and canters beneath the rider as necessary. It has also been given the strength to carry burdens, like the donkey, but it has also been given an increased perfection that has not been given to the donkey. If (the horse) is not up to its task, then it is made into a pack animal and falls to the level of a donkey. This becomes its ruin and abasement.

In the same way, some suppose that man has been created for eating, sleeping, copulating, and taking pleasure and they spend all their time in these! Some like the Arabs, the Kurds, and the Turks suppose that man was created for dominion, violence, and conquest. Both groups are in error; for eating and copulating are carnal appetites. These have also been given to the quadrupeds. A camel can eat more than a man can, and the copulation of sparrows is more frequent than that of mankind. So, how are humans superior to them? Dominion and conquest are with anger, and they have been given to the beasts of prey.

orthography. However, it is in this work unusual for Ghazzali to introduce the Quranic verse with Arabic rather than Persian.

<sup>143</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>144</sup> "wars of faith": *jihād* means "striving, endeavor" in all senses, not just warfare which is indeed called the "lesser striving," as opposed to the struggle with oneself. Here, however, Ghazzali is referring to military operations. Ghazzali's life coincided with the great Euro-Christian assault on Islam known as the Crusades. Jerusalem was captured by the soldiers of the First Crusade in AH493-4/1099CE and held until its liberation by Salahuddin (Saladin) in AH583-4/1187CE.

Therefore, a human being has that which has been given to the animals and wild beasts, but in addition, he has been given a perfection, and that is intellect. With it, he comes to know God Most High and His handiwork. With it, he delivers himself from the grasp of appetite and anger. This is the attribute of the angels! With it, he dominates animals and beasts of prey. All are subservient to him; everything that is upon the face of the earth, as God Most High said: *He has made all of that which is on earth subservient to you.* (Q. 45:13)

So, the true nature of a human being is that his perfection and his nobility lie within him, and other attributes are foreign and acquired. They were sent to him to aid and serve him. For this reason, when he dies, neither anger nor appetite remains, just it remains: either a bright, gleaming essence, adorned with the spiritual knowledge of God Most High in the form of an angel so that it is necessarily their companion; and this is the companion of the heavenly host. They are always in the Divine Presence: *In the seat of truth with a Mighty King;* (Q. 54:55) or dark, gloomy, with head bowed in shame, the darkness because of the tarnishing that comes from the gloom of sin, and the shame that comes from taking one's ease with the morals of the carnal appetite and anger. Whatever his appetite was, he satisfied it in this world. His soul is turned to this world, for his appetites and desires are of this world. But this world is beneath that (next) world. Thus, his face was looking downward and inverted. This is the meaning of what He said: *When the guilty hang their heads before their Lord.* (Q. 32:12)

Such people will be with Satan in (that place in hell called) *Sijjin.*<sup>145</sup> Not everyone knows the meaning of *Sijjin* and for that reason He asked: *And what will make thee comprehend what Sijjin is?* (Q. 83:8)

## 10. THE MARVELS OF THE WORLDS OF THE SOUL

There is no end to the marvels of the worlds of the soul. Its nobility lies in that it is more marvelous than all else; but most people are heedless of that. Its nobility has two degrees: one is by way of knowledge; the second is by way of power. Its nobility from knowledge has two degrees: one may be understood by the mass of mankind, the other is less obvious and is not known by every person, and that one is rarer.

As for what is obvious, it is that it has the ability to learn all sciences and arts, in order to know all arts, and to read and learn all that is in books, such as geometry, mathematics, medicine, astrology, and religious sciences. Although (the soul) is one thing and not divisible, it

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<sup>145</sup> *Sijjin:* Derived from the root *s-j-n* with the meaning of imprisonment. *Sijn* means "prison." "Sijjin" refers to a deep pit in which the register of the wicked is kept pending judgment, and, by extension, the book itself.

can accommodate all these sciences. Indeed, all the world would be like an atom in it! In an instant, it can soar from the earth to the heights in its thought and movement, or from east to west. Though it remains bound to the earth, it measures all of the heavens and learns the measure of each star and it may tell the distance in yards! It may contrive to bring fish up from the bottom of the sea and to bring birds down from the air to the ground. It may subdue to its service powerful animals such as the elephant, the camel, and the horse. All the marvels and skills of the world are its calling, and all of this knowledge is acquired by means of the five senses, because they are external and all know its way.

But more marvelous than that is that there is a window inside the soul open to the kingdom of the heavens, just as there are five gates<sup>146</sup> outside the soul open to the world of perceptible things, that which is called the physical world, as the heavenly world is called the spiritual world. Most people are acquainted with the perceptible physical world: this is limited and of low estate. They learn about it through their senses of perception, and this knowledge is also limited.

The proof that there is another aperture inside the soul lies in two things: (1) one is dreaming. When the approaches to the (physical) senses are closed, the inner door is opened. From the celestial world and the Preserved Tablet<sup>147</sup> the unseen begins to manifest itself, so that what will be in the future may be known and seen: either clearly, just as it will be; or metaphorically so that it falls in need of interpretation. As far as (something) is external, people suppose that a person who is awake will take precedence in knowledge; while they realize that they do not see the unseen while awake, but rather see it in sleep, and not by means of the (physical) senses.

A discussion about the truth concerning dreams is not possible in this book. However, this much must be known: that the soul resembles a mirror, and the Preserved Tablet is like a mirror in which are the forms of all existing things. Just as the reflection in one mirror will be reflected in another mirror placed in front of it, so do the forms in the Preserved Tablet appear in the soul—if it is pure and is free of sensory perceptions, and it takes up a connection to it. As long as it is engaged with the sensory perceptions, it will be deprived of the connection to the celestial world. But in sleep, it is not encumbered with sensory perceptions; consequently, whatever is in (the soul's) essential nature of contemplation of the firmament begins to appear.

However, even though the senses are not active because of sleep, the imagination is in place. It is for this reason that what one sees is seen

<sup>146</sup> The five senses.

<sup>147</sup> The Preserved Tablet (*lawh-i mahfūz*): The tablet upon which original of the Quran was inscribed, and which later was conceived of as the tablet upon which the decrees of God are written.

in the robe of imaginary symbols; it is not clear and (fully) disclosed. It is not devoid of veils and wrappings. But when one dies, neither imagination nor the senses endure. Then things are seen unveiled and without imaginings. And it will be said to one: *And We have removed from thee thy covering and piercing is thy sight this day.* (Q. 50:22) And he will reply: *Our Lord! We have now seen and heard, so send us back; we will do right.* (32:12)

(2) Another proof is that there is no one who has a sound mind and sagacity who has not experienced the inner voice in his soul.<sup>148</sup> It does not come from the senses of perception; instead, it appears in the soul and it is not known whence it comes.

From this much, one understands that not all knowledge comes from the senses; and one knows that the soul is not of this world, but from the celestial world. The senses that were created for one for this world are necessarily a curtain between one and the celestial world. Until one can remove it, in no manner will one find a way to that world.

## **11. THE LINK OF THE SOUL TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

Do not suppose that the window of the soul to the kingdom of heaven does not open without sleep and death. That is not so. Rather, if one practices spiritual discipline<sup>149</sup> when awake and removes the soul beyond the grasp of anger, carnal appetite, ill nature, and the necessary<sup>150</sup> of this world and one sits in a secluded place, closes one's eyes, suspends the work of sensory organs, connects the soul to the empyrean by continuously repeating "God! God!" (*Allāh! Allāh!*) with the soul (*dil*) and not the tongue until one is unaware of one's self and has no report of the entire world or of anything save God Most High. If it is thus, then the window of the soul will open even though one be awake, and one will see while awake what others see in sleep. The spirits of the angels will become visible to one in beautiful images and one will begin to see the prophets and receive benefit and help from them. The kingdoms of the earth and the heavens will be shown to one.

Wonderful things that beggar description will be seen by the person to whom this way is opened. As the Prophet (S) said: "*The earth was unrolled before me and I saw its (farthest) eastern and western regions.*" And God Most High has said: *Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he might be one of those possessing certainty.* (Q. 6:75) All were in this state; indeed, all the

<sup>148</sup> That is: inspiration (*ilhām*).

<sup>149</sup> "spiritual discipline": *riyādat*.

<sup>150</sup> "the necessary" (*bāyist*): Literally, a verbal form (3rd person singular past) "it must have been, it ought to have been" being used as a noun to refer to necessities.

knowledge of the prophets came in this way, not by means of the senses and (academic) instruction. It is the beginning of all earnest striving.

As God, may He be glorified and exalted, says: *So remember the name of thy Lord and devote thyself to Him with a complete devotion.* (Q. 73:8) This means to cut oneself off from all things and to give oneself to Him totally. Concern not thyself with the arrangements of this world, for He will manage thy affairs Himself. *Lord of the East and the West! There is no god except Him, so take Him as thy protector.* (Q. 73:9) When thou hast taken Him as thy protector, become unencumbered and mix not with mankind or become involved with them. *And be patient with what they say and part with them pleasantly.* (Q. 73:10) All of this is instruction in spiritual discipline and striving. The way of the Sufis is this, and it is the way of prophethood.

On the other hand, acquiring knowledge by means of (academic) learning is the way of the religious scholars,<sup>151</sup> and this too is great; but it is trivial in comparison with the knowledge of the prophets and saints that came to their souls from the Divine Presence without an intermediary or the instruction of human beings. The correctness of this way has been shown to many people, both through experience and by intellectual proof. If thou art not able to acquire this either by means of experience or the intellect; then, well, at least believe in it and attest to it, lest thou be deprived of all three levels and become an unbeliever! And these are among the marvels of the worlds of the soul and through them, the nobility of the human soul is made manifest.

## 12. A PERSON'S BEING BORN WITH AN INNATE NATURE

Suppose not that this is restricted to the prophets; rather, the essence of all persons in its original nature is fit for this; just as there is no iron, in its original nature, unsuited for the making of a mirror that may disclose the form of the world—unless it has been spoiled by some corrosive thrown into its substance. In the same way, every soul that has been overcome by the worldly greed and appetite for sins which have become firmly established in it—to the point of being possessed by them and assuming their nature—nullifies this (potential) suitability: *All who are born are born with an innate nature;*<sup>152</sup> *their parents make them Jews, Christians, or Magians.*

God Most High has spoken of the generality of this capacity when He said in these words: “*Am I not your Lord?*” *And they said: “Yes, indeed!”* (Q. 7:172) It is as basic as answering to every sane person who asks “Is two not greater than one?” “Yes, indeed, that is

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<sup>151</sup> “religious scholars”: *‘ulamā’.*

<sup>152</sup> *innate nature (fiṭrat):* that is, Islam.

correct." Even though all persons possessing the faculty of reason may not have heard or uttered this (truth), all of their instincts are replete with its acknowledgment.

The innate nature of all human beings is the same as that: the knowledge of the Divine is also in their innate nature. As the Creator Most High said: *If thou shouldst ask them: Who created the heavens and the earth? They would surely answer: God!* (Q. 31:25) And He said: *The nature of God in which He created mankind.* (Q. 30:30) With the proofs of reason and empiricism, it is plain that this (capacity) is not restricted to the prophets, for the prophets were also human beings. *God Most High said* (to the Prophet): *Say: I am but a mortal like you.* (Q. 18:110)

However, (as for) the person to whom this way has been opened, if it is for the good of the people, all is shown to him, and (then) he invites them to it. What has been shown him is called "the Religious Law," and that person is called a "messenger."<sup>153</sup> His condition is called a "miracle." If he does not engage in inviting the people, he is called a "saint"<sup>154</sup> and his states are called saintly miracles.<sup>155</sup> It is not necessary that every one in whom this state is seen be involved in the propagation of the faith. It is in the power of God Most High not to employ him in (publicly) inviting the people (to faith). This is because when the Religious Law is new there is no need for another kind of invitation, or because public propagation of the faith needs certain qualities that the saint may not possess.

Accordingly, thou must have a proper belief in sainthood and the miracles of the saints. Know, too, that the beginning of this work depends upon earnest striving, and it is a way for him to choose. However, not everyone who sows reaps, not everyone who travels, arrives, and not everyone who seeks finds. For the more precious a thing is, the more numerous the conditions and the rarer its attainment. These are the more noble of the degrees for a human being at the station of spiritual knowledge. Pursuing it without strenuous effort and without an experienced, mature guide is not possible. If these two (qualities) are present, he still will not reach his goal without the aid of Divine favor and until his destiny decrees this (spiritual) happiness (for him). This is the way to achieve the level of leadership in external knowledge and in all voluntary actions.

<sup>153</sup> Ghazzali uses the exact Per. equivalent (*payghambar* = "message-bearer") for the Ar. *rasul* (messenger).

<sup>154</sup> "saint" (*wali*, pl. *awliyā*): *wali* carries the connotation of friend and, by extension, a friend of God; a favorite of God (or king). The Arabic root *w-l-y* implies "proximity, nearness," hence "friend, guardian, defender," etc. In popular Islam, it usually means "saint, holy man."

<sup>155</sup> A miracle wrought by God is called *mu'jizah*, while a miracle performed by a saint is called *karāmah*, a distinction not always observed in popular speech.

### 13. THE NOBILITY OF THE SOUL BY WAY OF POWER

As thou hast come to know one exemplar<sup>156</sup> of the nobility of the essence of human nature, that which is called the soul (*dil*), in the way of spiritual knowledge, know now that there is also for it a nobility from power, which is an angelic quality too, and not found in other animals. It is this: that in the same way that the world of physical bodies is subject to the angels so that when, at God Most High's command, they deem it appropriate and they see that man is in need of it, they bring rain in the springtime, arouse the winds, form animals in the womb and plants on the earth, and bring them to fruition. There is a group of angels responsible for each kind of these tasks. The human soul—for it shares the essence of the angels—has also been given the power to subject some of the physical bodies of the world to itself.

Every person's private world is his (physical) body, and the body is made subservient to the soul. It is evident that the soul is not in the finger, nor are knowledge and will; but when the soul commands it, the finger moves at the soul's command. When the image of anger appears in the soul, sweat pours out from the seven members<sup>157</sup> as though it were rain. When the image of carnal appetite appears in the soul, the instrument of carnality<sup>158</sup> swells. When it thinks of eating, that faculty which is under the tongue becomes active and begins to salivate in order to moisten the food so that the person may eat.

It is no secret that the control of the soul flows through the body and that the body is subjugated to the soul. However, it must be understood that it is proper that some souls—nobler and stronger, nearer to and more resembling the angelic essence—be obeyed by other bodies external to it so that should his awe affect a lion, it will become abject and obey him. When a sick person acquires hope, he improves; when a sound person becomes anxious, he falls ill. When he forms the thought about a person for that person to come to him, a stimulus (to do that) appears in that person. If he forms the desire for it to rain, it rains.

All of this is possible with intellectual proof and is evident through experience. That which is called “the evil eye” and that which is called “sorcery” are of this kind and are the effects of a person's spirit (*nafs*) on the bodies of others, so that should that spirit be mean and envious, for example, he sees a fine steed and out of jealousy imagines its destruction. The animal will die instantly, as is said in the tradition: *The evil eye is real; it causes the man to enter the grave and the camel the pot.*

<sup>156</sup> *namūdgār*: Something or someone who gives proof of or represents virtue or skill.

<sup>157</sup> “the seven members” (*haft andām*): the head, breast, belly, hands, and feet; or, the head, hands, sides, and feet. Also called “the seven members” (*haft a<sup>c</sup>qā*) (Steingass).

<sup>158</sup> i.e., the penis.

So, this too is one of the marvels of the powers of the soul. If such a special quality as this appears in a person—if he is one who calls the people to faith—it is called a “(prophetic) miracle,” or if not, it is called a “(saintly) miracle.”<sup>159</sup> If these are for good deeds, then the ones who perform them are call prophets or saints.<sup>160</sup> But if they are for evil deeds, then we call that person a sorcerer.

Sorcery, the miracles (of the saints), and the miracles (of the prophets) are all related to the power of the human soul, though there are many differences among them that it is not possible to discuss in this book.

#### **14. THE TRUE NATURE OF PROPHETHOOD AND SAINTHOOD**

If a person does not know the above, then he really has no knowledge about the true nature of prophethood, except in form and by hearsay. For prophethood and sainthood are categories of the nobility of the human soul and they may be summarized in three qualities:

Firstly, that which is disclosed to the commonalty of mankind in sleep is disclosed to him when awake.

Secondly, the souls (*nafs*) of most people affect nothing but their own bodies, but soul (of a prophet or a saint) affects bodies external to his body, in a manner that is for the good of mankind and to prevent corruption.

Thirdly, that knowledge which the commonalty of mankind acquires by learning is acquired from his own internal self without the learning process. Just as it is true that an intelligent and pure-hearted person can learn some things for himself without instruction, so it is true that a stronger and purer person can learn the knowledge of all trades, or most of them, or a few of them, by himself. Such knowledge is called “intuitive.”<sup>161</sup> As God Most High said: *We taught him knowledge from Ourselves.* (Q. 18:65)

Anyone in whom these three qualities are found is either a great prophet or a great saint. If he possesses but one of these, he will attain a (high) degree. Furthermore, there are gradations for each of these (qualities) and one person may have them in a lesser degree, while another in a greater degree.

<sup>159</sup> That is: the miracles or wonders attributed to saints, as opposed to the miracles attributed to the prophets. See Note 155 above.

<sup>160</sup> See Note 154 above.

<sup>161</sup> “intuitive” (*laduni*): inspired from on High, infused knowledge: mystic knowledge acquired without conscious effort, such as that given to the prophets and saints. The Quranic verse cited following uses the word *ladunnā* (from Ourselves). *Ladunī* is an abstract noun from the Arabic preposition *ladūn* meaning “at, by, in the presence of, with,” etc.

The perfection of our Messenger (S) lies in that he possessed all three qualities at the highest level of perfection. When God, may He be glorified and exalted, desired to direct mankind to prophethood so that they might follow it and learn the way of (spiritual) happiness from it, He gave a proof of each of the three qualities to everyone. Dreaming is the proof of one quality, sound sagacity the proof of another, and sound instinct the proof of the third.

It is not possible for a person to come to believe in something for which he has no affinity. Whatever does not embody or represent it well to him cannot be the embodiment of that concept. For this reason, no one can comprehend perfectly the true nature of divinity, except God Most High. A discussion of this assertion is lengthy and I have given lucid proofs in the book *The Meanings of the Names of God*.<sup>162</sup> The point is, now, that we deem it permissible that beyond these three qualities, prophets and saints have other qualities of which we have no knowledge because we cannot perceive them. So, as we say that no one knows God perfectly except God Most High (Himself), we say that no one knows the Messenger, on whom be peace, perfectly except the Messenger, and whoever is at his exalted degree.

Therefore, among mankind, prophets know the worth of prophets. No more is known to us than that. If we did not dream and someone said to us: "A person falls down and does not move or see or hear, but he knows what will happen tomorrow as though he were (awake), hearing and seeing what he could not know," we would never believe it, because a person would never believe what he had not seen. For this reason, God Most High said: *Nay, but they denied that which their knowledge could not encompass and the interpretation of which has not come to them.* (Q. 10:39) He (also) said: *And since they will not be guided by (this Quran), they say: This is an ancient lie.* (Q. 46:11)

Be not surprised if the prophets and the saints have an attribute of which others have no inkling, and that they have noble delights and states from it. Thou seest that a person who has no aptitude for poetry finds no pleasure in the rhythm of music. If someone tries to make him understand its pleasure, he will not be able to do so. That is because he has no affinity for it. In the same manner, the blind cannot comprehend the pleasure of colors and the desire to see them. Consequently, be not surprised by the power of God Most High Who has created some perceptions after the degree of prophethood and before it of which no person is aware.

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<sup>162</sup> *The Meanings of the Names of God* (*Ma‘ānī Asmā’ Allāh*): Presumably this work is the same as *Al-maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ asmā’ Allāh al-husnā* (*The Most Radiant Meaning in the Explanation of Most Beautiful Names of God*), No. 33 in HK’s list of the writings of Ghazzali, its composition coming in the body of work between *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* and *The Alchemy of Happiness*.

### 15. THE VEILING OF THE WAY

From all that has gone before, the nobility of the essence of human nature and what the way of the Sufis is has been made clear. Certainly, thou hast heard Sufis say: "Knowledge is a veil (obstructing) this way," and thou hast rejected it. Do not reject those words, for they are true. Why? When thou becomest occupied with and immersed in sensory perceptions and all the knowledge obtained by means of them, they become a veil.

The similitude of the soul is a pool, and the similitude of the senses is five channels of water that flow into that pool from the outside. If thou wish for pure water to rise from the bottom of the pool, it must be done in this fashion: all of the water must be removed from the pool and all of the mud that has been deposited by that water cleaned out. The channels must be closed off so that water does not flow in from them. Then the bottom of the pool must be excavated until pure water rises from within the pool. As long as the pool is occupied by that water which has come in from the outside, it is not possible for the internal water to well up. In the same way, the knowledge which comes from inside the soul will not appear until the soul is emptied of all that has entered it from the outside.

However, if the savant empties himself of the knowledge he has learned and his soul is not occupied with it, then that former knowledge will not be a veil for him. It is possible that it will become an opening for him; just as past imaginings are not a veil for the soul when it is emptied of imaginings and sensory perceptions. The cause for the veil is that when a person learns the belief of the followers of the orthodox Practice of the Prophet<sup>163</sup> and its proofs as they are discussed in polemics and debates, he takes them all upon his soul and believes that beyond what he has learned there is no other knowledge. If something different enters his soul, he says: "This is different from what I have heard and anything different from it is invalid."

It will never be possible for the truth of matters to be shown to him. That belief which the commonalty of mankind learns is the mould of truth, not truth itself. Complete spiritual knowledge is that the truths be uncovered from that mould, as a kernel is taken out of the husk.

Know that no truth has been disclosed to a person who learns the way of disputation in defense of belief. Since he supposes that what he possesses is all, this supposition becomes his veil. According to how much this supposition that he has learned something has mastered a person, the more such people are veiled (from the truth). This is the degree of the disputatious.

<sup>163</sup> "Practice of the Prophet": *Sunnah* or *Sunnat*.

Therefore, should a person come out of this supposition, knowledge will not be a veil before him. Instead, when this opening appears to him, his degree attains the farthest limit of perfection and his way is safer and straighter. A person whose foot has not been previously firmly placed in knowledge will spend a long time in imaginary bonds and a little cause for doubt will become veil for him. But the savant is immune from such danger. Therefore, thou must know the meaning of "knowledge is a veil," and not deny it when thou hearest it from a person who has reached the degree of ecstasis.<sup>164</sup>

Yet these freethinkers<sup>165</sup>, these useless ringdoves who have appeared in this era; never have they themselves enjoyed this state, but they have excerpted deceptive phrases from idle ravings of the Sufis. Their business is to wash themselves every day and to outfit themselves with a loin wrapper,<sup>166</sup> a ragged garment, and a prayer carpet. Then they slander knowledge and the religious scholars. They deserve death and are demons among the people. They are the enemies of God and the Prophet, for God and the Prophet have praised knowledge and the scholars and have invited the entire world to knowledge. These collared wretches, since they have no state and have acquired no knowledge—who makes their speech lawful? They are like that person who has heard that the philosopher's stone<sup>167</sup> is better than gold, because limitless gold can be made from it. If someone places a treasure of gold before him, he will refuse it, saying: "What good is gold and what value does it have? I want the philosopher's stone, which is its source!" He will never possess the philosopher's stone. He will remain a penniless, hungry wretch, relishing and bragging about his words: "I said that the philosopher's stone is better than gold."

Thus, the apocalypses of the prophets and saints is like the philosopher's stone and the knowledge of the religious scholars is like gold; for, in short, the possessor of the philosopher's stone is superior to the possessor of gold. However, there is another point here: if a person should have enough of the stone to make a hundred dinars, he would not be superior to a person who had a thousand (dinars). Though there are many books about alchemy and much talk about it, and many seek the

<sup>164</sup> "ecstasy": *mukāshafat*.

<sup>165</sup> Freethinkers, or Libertines (*ibāhatīn*): Ghazzali is referring to members of the *Ibahiah* sect who were libertines, regarding all things lawful. They did not consider themselves bound by the limits and responsibilities of the Religious Law, nor did they think observing its commands necessary for the "people of the truth" (*ahl-i ḥaqīqat*). The Arabic word *ibāhah* is a verbal noun meaning "to disclose, abandon, permit, allow, justify, warrant, make lawful." W. Montgomery Watt calls them "Latitudinarians."

<sup>166</sup> "loin wrapper" (*fūtah*): a rectangular piece of loosely woven cloth wrapped around the waist and covering the privates when in the public bath or similar situations. Still in use in public baths, in modern Persian it is usually called a *lung*.

<sup>167</sup> Lead, or the philosopher's stone, which alchemy was supposed to change to gold.

philosopher's stone, the truth is that no one has found it during many ages. Most of those who start out to look for it find only false coin. So, the business of the Sufis is like that; they are scarce. Those there are, are few; and it is rare to find one who has achieved perfection.

Therefore, from this thou must know that every one in whom a little of the Sufi state may be found is not superior to all scholars. Most of them have this at the beginning of their calling, but then they fall away and do not perfect it. There are others, overcome with melancholy or a fancy and, having no portion of truth, suppose that that is an achievement! Nine out of ten are thus. Just as there is truth in dreams, yet there are confused, senseless dreams; in that state, it is like that. Rather, superiority over the religious scholar is his who is so perfect in that state that every science connected to religion, which others acquire through study, he himself knows without study, but this is difficult and rare.

So, thou must have faith in the verity of the way of Sufism and their (the Sufis') merit. Lose not thy faith in them because of the freethinkers of this age. Know that whoever reviles knowledge and the religious scholars does so out of (his own) fruitlessness.<sup>168</sup>

## 16. THE HAPPINESS OF A HUMAN BEING LIES IN THE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD MOST HIGH

Surely, thou wilt say: "What demonstrates that human (spiritual) happiness lies in the spiritual knowledge of God Most High?" Know that it is demonstrated by that which thou already knowest: that the happiness of every thing is in that in which one's pleasure and ease lie. The pleasure of everything lies in that it is required by one's nature. The requirement of one's nature for anything is that for which (one's nature) was created, as the pleasure of the carnal appetite lies in satisfying its craving, the pleasure of anger is in taking revenge on an enemy, the pleasure of the eye is in looking at beautiful forms, and the pleasure of the ear is in listening to delightful songs and tunes.

In the same way, the pleasure of the soul lies in its special quality for which it was created: and that is the knowledge of the true nature of matters, and this is the special quality of the human soul. As for carnal appetite, anger, and sensory perception by means of the five senses—these themselves are for dumb animals.

It is because of this that it is in the nature of a person to investigate that which he does not know in order to know it. He delights in everything that he knows and is proud of it, even though it is, for example, some trifling thing such as chess. If it is said to a person who knows (chess): "Do not teach it to anyone," he will find it difficult to

<sup>168</sup> That is, he reviles them because he himself has accomplished nothing.

restrain himself, for he delights in his knowledge of the strange game and he wishes to display his accomplishment (to others).

Now that thou knowest that the pleasure of the soul lies in the spiritual knowledge of matters, thou knowest that however much the knowledge of something is greater and nobler, the pleasure is greater. For that person who delights in knowing the secrets of a minister will be more delighted to know the secrets of a king and his thoughts about the management of the kingdom. And that person who knows geometry and the form and dimensions of the heavens will be happier than he who knows how to play chess. And the person who has learned how the chessmen must be placed and has done so, has derived a greater pleasure than the person who knows how it must be played.

In the very same way, however much the thing learned is nobler, its knowledge is nobler and the pleasure (of that knowledge) is that much greater. There is no being nobler than that in Whom lies the nobility of all existing things. He is the Sovereign and King of both worlds and all the wonders of the universe are the signs of His handiwork. Consequently, there can be no knowledge nobler and more pleasurable than this; no spectacle can be more pleasurable than the spectacle of the Divine Presence, and that is according to demand of the soul's nature. This is because the demand of the nature of any thing is its natural disposition, for sake of which it was created.

If a soul be diseased thereby nullifying the demand for this knowledge, it is like a diseased body in which the demand for food is nullified so that it prefers clay to bread.<sup>169</sup> If (the body) is not treated to restore its natural appetite to its place and the perverse appetite does not depart from him, he will be wretched in this world and perish. That person, whose appetite for other things is stronger in his soul than the appetite for the spiritual knowledge of the Divine Presence in his soul, will be wretched in the next world and ruined if he is not cured.

All of the sensual appetites and pleasures attached to the human body necessarily lapse at death and the sorrow that was carried by the body there becomes nullified; but the pleasure of the spiritual knowledge attached to the soul is doubled at death, for the soul is not destroyed at death. Rather, it becomes more luminous and its pleasure is multiplied because the troubling of the carnal appetites has departed (from it). A complete explanation of this will come and be found at the end of the book in the chapter on love,<sup>170</sup> if God Most High be willing.

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<sup>169</sup> Probably a reference to geophagia, the practice of eating earth or clay.

<sup>170</sup> Fourth Pillar, Chapter 9.

## 17. THE MARVELS OF (HIS) HANDIWORK IN THE HUMAN BODY

Let this amount that has been said about the states of the human essence in a book such as this suffice. If someone should want further explanation, we have given it in the book named *The Marvels of the Heart*.<sup>171</sup> However, even with these two books, man will not become a perfect knower<sup>172</sup> of the self, for all this explanation is (but) of some of the attributes of the soul, and this is one pillar; the other pillar of a human being is the body.

There are also many marvels in the creation of the body. Externally and internally, in each organ, there are marvelous qualities; in each one, there are strange graces. In the human body, there are several thousand sinews, veins, and bones, each one possessing a different shape and attribute, each one for a special purpose. And thou art unaware of all of this! Thou knowest this much, that the hand is for grasping, the foot is for walking, and the tongue is for speaking. But thou knowest not that thine eye is composed of ten different layers. If there is one less than ten, sight is impaired. Nor dost thou know what each layer is for and for what purpose the eye needs it. The (small) size of the eye is obvious, but its scientific exposition has filled many large volumes.

Of course, if thou know this not, it is not strange that thou wilt not know what the internal organs, such as the liver, the spleen, the gall bladder, the kidneys, etc., are for. The purpose of the liver is to convert all of the various kinds of food that reach it from the stomach into an homogeneous (substance) the color of blood, so that it may be suitable to nourish the seven members.<sup>173</sup> After the blood is matured in the liver, part of it remains as dregs: that is the black bile. The purpose of the spleen is to remove the black bile from (the liver). On the top of it a froth like egg yolk accumulates. That is the yellow bile or gall. The purpose of the gall bladder is to draw the gall from it. When the blood emerges from the liver, it is thin, diluted, and insubstantial. The purpose of the kidneys is take away water from it so that the blood, without the black and yellow biles, reaches the veins with sustenance.

If the gall bladder be damaged, the gall stays in the blood. From that, jaundice arises and other illnesses related to yellow bile appear. If the spleen is afflicted, the black bile stays with the blood and diseases

<sup>171</sup> *The Marvels of the Heart* ("Aja'ib al-Qalb), or "soul," *qalb* being the Arabic equivalent of Persian *dil* in Ghazzali's lexicon. See also Note 120. This book is not found in HK's list; it may be a section of a larger work.

<sup>172</sup> "knower" ("ārif): apart from its general meaning of "one who knows," in religious and especially mystical circles, it has the special meaning of "saint, holy man, gnostic" and describes one who has achieved the highest state of a mystic.

<sup>173</sup> See Note 157 above.

related to black bile appear. If the kidneys be afflicted and water remain in the blood, dropsy will result.

In the same way, every one of the external and internal organs has been created for a particular function without which the body would be defective. Indeed, the human body is, in miniature, a model of the entire world. In it, there is a parallel for everything that has been created in the world: the bones are like the mountains, sweat is like water, the hair is like the forests, the brain is like the sky, the senses are like the stars; the details of this comparison are lengthy. Moreover, for every kind of thing that has been created there is a parallel: such as for pigs, dogs, wolves, beasts of burden, demons, fairies, and angels, as has been noted previously.

And for every kind of endeavor in the world there is a parallel, too: the power of the stomach is like a cook, it digests the food; and that which sends the strained food to the liver and the sediment to the intestines is like an oil presser; and that which converts the strained food to blood in the liver is like a dyer; and that which changes the blood in the breast to white milk and to semen in the testicles is like a washerman; and that which draws nourishment from the liver to itself in every part (of the body) is like a street vendor; and that in the kidneys which draws water from the liver and conducts it to the bladder is like a water-bearer; and that which excretes the sediment from the intestines is like a sweeper; and that which excites the yellow and black biles inside the abdomen to ruin the body is like a seditious charlatan; and that which blocks the gall and illnesses is like a just chief. The exposition of this is also lengthy.

The point is that thou shouldst realize how many different factors there are inside thee, each one of which is engaged in thine enterprise. While thou art enjoying a sweet sleep, they never rest in thy service. Neither art thou aware of them nor dost thou express gratitude for the fact that they have been set up for thy service. Should some one send thee his slave to work for thee for a day, thou wilt spend a lifetime thanking him. Yet thou dost not remember Him Who has sent thousands of workmen inside thee to serve thee, servants who do not pause for one moment in their service during thine entire lifetime!

The knowledge of the structure of the body and the use of its limbs is called "anatomy." It is a great science, yet people neglect it and do not study it. Those who do, study in order to become doctors of medicine, but medicine and the study of medicine are trivial even though there is a need for them; they have no connection to the way of religion. However, if a person studies it in order to see the wonders of God Most High's handiwork, three of the Divine Attributes will necessarily appear to him:

The first is that he will know that the builder of this mould and the Creator of this person is perfectly All-Powerful. His power cannot be

affected by defect or weakness, for He can do whatever He desires. There is no work in the world more wonderful than this: that from a droplet of fluid He creates such a person! For One Who can do this, resurrecting him after death will be (much) easier!

The second is that he will know that there is a Knower Whose knowledge encompasses all things. Such marvels with all these strange devisings would not be possible except through the perfection of (His) knowledge.

The third is that His grace, mercy, and care for His servants are limitless. The Creator has not stinted in anything that is requisite for him; rather, He has given him what is requisite, such as a heart, a liver, a brain, and the basics of life. And He has given him things which he needed, but were not absolute necessities, such as hands, feet, eyes, and a tongue. And He has given him that which was not needed or necessary, but would improve his appearance, such as the blackness of the hair, the redness of the lips, the arch of the eyebrows, a straight posture, the evenness of the eyelashes, etc. He did not show this grace and attention only to mankind; on the contrary, to all things created, even to a gnat, a fly, or a bee. He gave them what was needed by them, and then He adorned their shapes and exteriors with beautiful colors and patterns

Thus, a study of the details of the creation of the human body is the key to the spiritual knowledge of the Divine attributes. It is in this manner and for this reason that this science (anatomy) is noble, not because a physician has need of it. Just as the more of the oddities of poetry, composition, and art thou knowest, the more the greatness of the poet, composer, or artist increases in thy heart; so the creative power of God Most High, too, is the key to the knowledge of the greatness of the Creator, may He be glorified!

And this is also a chapter of the knowledge of the self (*nafs*), but (this knowledge of the body) is trivial in comparison with the knowledge of the soul. The body is like a horse and the soul is like the rider. The object of creation is the rider, not the mount. The mount is for the rider, not the rider for the mount. However, let this also be said so that thou may know that thou canst not completely comprehend thyself so easily, even though there is nothing nearer to thee than thou art. A person who does not know himself and claims to know something else is like a bankrupt who cannot feed himself, but claims to give food to all of the poor of the city and that they eat his bread. This is both repugnant and absurd.

## 18. THE EXTREMITY OF HUMAN WEAKNESS AND INADEQUACY IN THIS WORLD

Now that thou hast come to know, from all this, the nobility, glory, and greatness of the essence of the human soul (*dil*), know that this precious essence has been given to thee and then hidden from thee. If thou seek it not, if thou spoil it and neglect it, it will be a tremendous negligence and loss! Make the effort to search for thine own soul and bring it out from among the entanglements of the world. Care for it in keeping with its perfection, so that its nobility and glory may be apparent in this world. Let it experience carefree joy, inextinguishable eternal life, unflagging power, certain spiritual knowledge, and the untarnished beauty of the (Divine) Presence.

However, in this world, its nobility lies in its preparation and suitability so that it may achieve true glory and nobility (in the Hereafter). If not, who is more deficient and wretched than he who is the prisoner of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, sickness, pain, dejection, sorrow, anger, and greed? All that gives him comfort is injurious to him; all that benefits him is bitter and painful.

As for the person who is noble and valued because of his knowledge, strength, power, ambition, will, or for his beauty and form:

If thou examinest his knowledge, who is more ignorant than he? For if one vein in his head should stir, he is in danger of death or insanity, yet he does not know from what he has come or what his end will be. It may be that he has the cure and sees it, but does not recognize it.

If thou examinest his power and strength, who is more helpless than he? He cannot overcome a fly! If a gnat is set over him, he is ruined at its hands. If a bee stings him, he will be sleepless and uneasy.

If thou examinest his ambition, he will become enraged and sorrowful for a trifling loss. If a single morsel should pass him by, he will faint with hunger. What can be more ignoble?

If thou examinest his beauty, it is a skin pulled over a dung heap! If he does not wash himself for two days, he will be disgraced so that it will be as though the odor of garlic and a stench are emanating from him. And what is more stinking and more disgraceful than that these are always inside him? He is their porter so that he must wash himself with his own hand twice a day.<sup>174</sup>

One day Shaykh Abu Sa'id,<sup>175</sup> may God have mercy upon him, was walking with some Sufis. He came upon a toilet being cleaned. (The

<sup>174</sup> A reference to washing oneself with water after a bowel movement.

<sup>175</sup> Shaykh Abu Sa'id: Shaykh Abu Sa'id Fadl-allah (bin) Abi-l-Khayr Muhammad (bin) Ahmad Mayhani (AH357-440/968-1049CE); one of the most influential of early Sufis. He was one of the creators of "the pattern of thought which afterwards became

workmen) were throwing the filth out onto the road. (The Sufis) fled to one side and held their noses. The shaykh remained and said: "O people, know ye what this filth says to me? It says: 'I am that which was in the market yesterday. Everyone spent money from his purse upon me in order to obtain me. I did not remain with thee more than a night. I became like this so I had to flee from thee, or thou from me.'"

In truth, it is like this in this world. A person is extremely deficient, weak, and base and the morrow will be his market day. If he throws the alchemy of (spiritual) happiness upon the essence of his soul, he will travel from the degree of the beasts to the degree of the angels. If he turns to the world and the appetites of the world, a dog or a pig will be superior to him tomorrow. But, when they have become dust, they will be released from misery, while he will remain in agony. So, when he has come to know his nobility, he must recognize his own deficiencies, baseness, and helplessness. In this way, that self-knowledge is one of the keys to the knowledge of God Most High.

Let this suffice concerning self-knowledge, as it is not possible to include more in a book like this. *And with God is the success.*

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universally famous in the writing of Sana'i, 'Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz, Jami,' etc. (A.J. Arberry, "Sufism" London, 1969) Of incalculable importance in the development of and articulation of Sufi ideas, he was both learned in all of the religious sciences of his day, and—according to all reports—was invested with extraordinary powers and compassion. His biography and stories about of his spiritual states may be found in the remarkable book *The Secrets of (God's) Unity (Asrār-al-Tawḥīd)* by a descendant, Muhammad bin Munawwar Abi Sa'd. He was also a considerable poet.

## THE SECOND TOPIC: KNOWING GOD, *MAY HE BE GLORIFIED AND EXALTED*

### 1. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF, THE KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Know that in the books of the previous prophets there is this well-known saying that was said to them: *Know thyself and thou knowest thy Lord*. And in the Traditions and the writings, (the saying) *He who has known his self has known his Lord* is well known. All of these are evidence that the human self (*nafs*) is like a mirror: whoever looks into it sees God. But many people do not look at themselves and do not know God. Therefore, from the aspect that it is the mirror of spiritual knowledge, coming to know the (spiritual) self is obligatory. This has two aspects:

*ONE* is more obscure and most intellects cannot comprehend it. It cannot be explained to ordinary folk, nor is telling it (to them) proper.

*THE OTHER*, however, can be understood by everyone and it is this: that a person knows the existence of the essence of God, *may He be praised and glorified*, from his own essence. From his own attributes, he recognizes the attributes of God Most High. From his own control over the kingdom of his self, which is his body and limbs, he recognizes the God's control over all the world.

The explanation of this is that he knows himself, firstly, by his own existence, and he knows that before that—by some years—he was non-existent. There was neither his name, nor any trace of him. As God Most High asks: *Has there come upon man (ever) a time in which he was a thing unremembered?* (Q. 76:1) That which a human being discovers of his own creation is that he knows that before his own existence he was a droplet of semen, a drop of fetid water, in which there was no intellect, no power of hearing or sight, no head, hand, leg, tongue, or eyes. There were no veins, muscles, bones, flesh, or skin. Rather, he was fluid: white, homogeneous. Then, all of these wonders were made manifest in him!

Either he made them manifest himself, or someone else made them manifest for him. Since he necessarily knows that (even) in the stage of perfect maturity, he is unable to create a single strand of hair, he realizes that when he was but a droplet of semen he was even more helpless and deficient. Therefore, the essence of God Most High becomes known to him from the coming into existence of his own essence.

When he looks at his own body, externally and internally, as has been explained to some, he sees the power of his own Creator, and he knows that it is a perfect power which may create anything it wishes as it wishes. What power is more perfect than that (power) which creates such

a perfect and beautiful person, full of marvels and wonders, from such a mean, contemptible droplet of fluid?

When he looks at the prodigies of his own attributes and the benefits of his external limbs and organs—each of which was created for a special purpose, such as, among the external organs: the hands, the feet, the eyes, the tongue, the teeth; and among the internal organs: the liver, the spleen, the gall bladder, etc.—he recognizes the utter perfection of the knowledge of his Creator. It encompasses everything. He knows nothing can be unknown to such a Knower. If all the intellects of all thinkers were put together and they were given long lives so that they could apply themselves to the task of bringing out another aspect of any one of all these organs in their creation, better than it is, they would not be able to (do so)! If they wished, for example, to change the position of the teeth wherein the front teeth are sharp in order to cut food and the others are broad in order to grind the food, and the tongue is below to serve as a kind of miller's scoop throwing the food into the mill, and the power under the tongue which is like a flowing spring which produces saliva at the appropriate moment to moisten the food so that the throat may swallow it and it not lodge there, all the brains of the world could not make it more perfect or improve upon this procedure.

And in the same way, the hand has five fingers. Four are of one kind, and the thumb, which is set a little apart from them and is shorter, can work with or go atop any one of them. The fingers have three joints, the thumb but two. This is so that if some one wants to hold something, or to make a scoop or ladle of the hand, or to round it into a fist and make it a weapon, or to spread it and make it into a kind of sieve or tray, he can. It has many other uses as well. If all the intellects of the world want to consider a different manner for the placement of the fingers, so that they would be in a line, or three on one side and two on the other, or to make them six instead of five, or four, or make the three joints two or four, whatever they think and say, all will be deficient. The most perfect is that which God Most High has created.

From this it is obvious that the knowledge of the Creator encompasses this person and that He is Aware of everything. Thus, there is a wisdom in each part of a person. However much a person may increase his knowledge, his astonishment at the magnitude of God Most High's knowledge will increase (accordingly).

And when a person looks at his own needs for his limbs, then (the need) for food, clothing, and shelter; and the need of his food for rain, wind, clouds, cold, heat, and the tools which, with prudence, bring it forth; and the need of those tools for materials such as iron, wood, copper, bronze, etc.; and the need of those materials for direction and the knowledge of how to make them—then he looks: all of this has been created and made in the most perfect and best manner. And from each one, so many different kinds that would have been impossible to occur in

the mind of any person if not they had not been created (in him), nor would one have been able to ask for (them). Unsought and unknown, one sees them fashioned with grace and mercy. From this, another of His attributes is made known—the lives of all the saints are to that end—and that is the attribute of kindness, mercy, and care for all created beings. As He said: *My mercy surpasses My anger*,<sup>176</sup> and as the Prophet (S) said: “The compassion of God, may He be honored and glorified, for His servants is greater than that of a mother for her nursing child.”

Therefore, one sees the existence of the essence of God Most High in the manifestation of one’s own essence. One sees the perfection of His knowledge in the prodigies of wisdom in one’s own parts. And in the gathering of that which is necessary and needful for one or for one’s goodness and adornment, all of which one finds created with one, one sees the kindness and mercy of God Most High. In this way, knowledge of the self becomes the mirror and key to the (spiritual) knowledge of God, *may He be glorified and exalted!*

## 2. THE PURITY AND SANCTITY OF GOD

As one has come to know the attributes of God, *may He be glorified and exalted*, from one’s own attributes, and His essence from one’s own essence, one may know His transcendence<sup>177</sup> and sanctity and from one’s own purity and sanctity. The meaning of purity and sanctity with respect to the Creator Most High is that He is (absolutely) pure and sanctified beyond anything that can be conceived or imagined. He is (absolutely) transcendent, beyond the addition of any locality to Him, even though no locality is devoid of His control. A person sees the parallel of this in himself. The true nature of his life which we call the “soul” (*dil*) is beyond that which comes in fancy and imagination. For we have said that it has no measure or quantity, nor is it divisible. As that is the case, it has no color, and anything that has no color or measure does not occur to the imagination under any condition, for that which appears in the imagination is something that the eye has seen, or its type has been seen. There is nothing in the province of the eye and imagination except shapes and colors.

<sup>176</sup> A Divine Saying (*hadith-i qudsi*). It relates a revelation from God in the language of the Prophet.

<sup>177</sup> “transcendence”: *tanzih* and *munazzah* (“transcendent”) are the verbal noun and past participle of the second verbal form of the Arabic root *n-z-h*, which has the basic intransitive meaning of “being untouched, unblemished.” The second form makes this meaning transitive: “to deem or make something untouched, unblemished”; hence, “transcendence.” Thus, the past participle *munazzah* would mean “purified.” In Arabic, *tanzih* also has the technical meaning of “elimination of anthropomorphic elements from the conception of the Deity; deanthropomorphism.” With respect to God, Ghazzali is probably using the word in this sense.

When our nature demands: "What is the thing like?" the meaning of that is: "What shape does it have?" "Is it small or large?" But, for something that does not admit of such descriptions, questions of nature and quality are useless. If thou wishest to know: "Is it permissible that something exist which does not admit of shape and form?" look into the true nature of thyself. That true nature of thine, which is the locus of spiritual knowledge, is indivisible and is not touched by measurement, quantity, or quality. If someone asks: "What kind of a thing is the soul?" the answer is: "It does not admit (of questions about) (its) nature and quality."

As thou hast known thyself from these qualities, know that God, *may He be honored and glorified*, surpasses them in purity and sanctity. People find it strange that there is an ineffable and inscrutable Being; yet, they are the same themselves—but they do not recognize their selves. However, if a person searches his own body, he will find and see thousands of things, all of which are ineffable and inscrutable. In himself, he sees anger, he sees love, he sees pain, and he sees pleasure. If he desires to seek their nature and quality, he will not be able to do so; for such things have neither form nor color and there is no way to question them.

Indeed, if a person were to seek the true nature of sound, the true nature of smell, or the true nature of taste—their nature and quality—he will be incapable of doing so. The reason for this is that (questions of) how and why are the demands of the imagination obtained from the sense of sight which then seeks out everything which is the province of the eye. The eye has no part in that which is in the province of the ear, such as the voice, for example, and it is impossible for it to see the how and why of sound. The sound of a voice is beyond the province of the eye, just as color and form are beyond the province of the ear. In the same manner, that which the sensory organ of the soul perceives and which is known by the intellect is beyond the province of all of the (physical) senses. There is a quality and nature in perceptible things. This is an investigation and profundity which we have explained in books of discourses. Let this suffice for this book.

The point is that a person can come to know the ineffability and inscrutability of himself from the ineffability and inscrutability of God, *may He be glorified and exalted*. He may know that as the soul (*jān*)<sup>178</sup> exists and is the sovereign of the body, every part of the body for which there is a purpose and nature is all its kingdom. But, it is ineffable and inscrutable, just as the Sovereign of the universe is ineffable and

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<sup>178</sup> Ghazzali uses the word *jān* that usually means "life," instead of *dil*, which he has been using for "soul." However, the word *jān* admits a meaning of soul, also.

inscrutable. All things that possess purpose and description, such as perceptible things, all are of His kingdom.

Another kind of transcendence is that which is not attributed to any place. The soul<sup>179</sup> cannot be attributed to any organ. One cannot say that it is in the hand, in the foot, in the head, or in some other place; indeed, all of the limbs of the body may be divided, but it is not divisible. It is impossible for the indivisible to alight in the divisible, for then it also becomes divisible. Though it does not accept attribution to any organ, no organ is free from its authority. Indeed, all of them are controlled by it and obey its command. It is the king of them all, just as the world is under the control of the King of the world, and He is above being ascribed to any particular place.

The totality of this kind of sanctification becomes manifest when thou speakest of the special quality and mystery of the soul (*rūh*). There is no permission to speak of the special quality and mystery of the soul. The totality of that is made manifest (by the words): *Verily God Most High created man in His image.*

### 3. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S MANAGEMENT OF HIS KINGDOM

Now that the existence of the essence of God Most High has been made known; His attributes, and His freedom from and sanctity beyond (questions of) how and why have been made known; and His immunity from ascription to a locality and the key to all spiritual knowledge of the human self made known; one aspect of knowledge remains: that is the knowledge of the nature of His management of His rule in His kingdom and in what manner it is accomplished. How are such things as His commanding the angels and their obedience to Him, the management of affairs by the angels, the sending of commands from heaven to earth, the movement of the heavens and the stars, the tying the affairs of the earth's inhabitants to the heavens, and the entrusting of the key of sustenance to heaven carried out?

This is a tremendous chapter in the spiritual knowledge of the Creator Most High. It is called the "Spiritual Knowledge of the Acts," as much as earlier (we spoke of) the "Spiritual Knowledge of the Essence" and the "Spiritual Knowledge of Attributes." The key to this, too, is the spiritual knowledge of the self. If thou dost not know how thou rulest in thine own kingdom, how canst thou expect to understand how the Ruler of the universe manages affairs?

Firstly, come to know thyself and one of thine own activities, say, for example, writing. If thou wishest to write the words "In the name of God" (*bismillāh*) on a piece of paper, first the desire and will to do so

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<sup>179</sup> "soul" (*jan*): or "vital spirit."

appear in thee. Then a motion and movement occurs in thy heart (*dil*), not the outward heart of flesh situated towards the left inside of thy breast. A tenuous substance moves from the heart (or soul) and travels to the brain. This tenuous substance is what the physicians call "spirit" (*rūh*) and it carries the powers of perception and motion. This is a different spirit from that which the beasts (also) have and which is susceptible to death. That different spirit, which the beasts do not have, we call the "soul" (*dil*) and it never perishes. It is the seat of the knowledge of God.

So, when this spirit reaches the brain and the image of "In the name of God" has been found in the repository at the front of the brain, which is the location of the faculty of the imagination, the result is transferred from the brain to the nerves which come out of the brain and reach in all directions and are linked to the fingertips like threads—they are visible on the forearm of a lean person. Then, the nerves quicken and activate the fingertips. The fingers move the pen and the pen moves the ink. Then the shape of *bismillāh* appears on the paper, just as it was in the repository of the imagination, with the aid of the senses, especially the eyes which are necessary for writing. Consequently, the initiator of this action was the desire, which appeared in thee. The beginning of all works is an attribute from among the attributes of God, one of which is Will.

Just as the first effect of this will appears in thy soul (*dil*), then by its means the effect reaches other places, so the first effect of the Will of God Most High appears on the Throne, then it goes to other places. Just as that tenuous substance, resembling vapor, is transported by the conduits of the heart to the brain—the substance we call "spirit" (*rūh*), God Most High has a tenuous essence that transports the effect from the Throne to the Pedestal. That essence is called an "angel,"<sup>180</sup> "spirit," or "the Holy Spirit."<sup>181</sup> As it reaches the brain from the heart and the brain is under the control of the soul, and in its province and at its command, so the effect of the (God's) Will reaches the Pedestal from the Throne of God Most High, and the Pedestal is beneath the Throne.

Even as the form of *bismillāh*, which was thy action and is thine object, appears in the repository at the front of the brain and the action is in accordance with that, the form of all which will appear in the world first appears on the Preserved Tablet.<sup>182</sup> And as the tenuous faculty which is in the brain activates the nerves to activate the hand and the fingers so that the fingers may cause the pen to move, so does the tenuous essence in charge of the Throne and the Pedestal cause the sky, together with the stars, to move.

<sup>180</sup>"angel": *firishtah*, literally, "sent." This is the common word for "angel" in Persian.

<sup>181</sup> Or: "the Holy Ghost" (*Rūh al- Qudus*).

<sup>182</sup> See Note 147.

And as the faculty of the brain through the connections of bones and nerves moves the fingers, that tenuous essence, which we call the angels, sets the dispositions of the elements<sup>183</sup> of the world by means of celestial bodies and their links of light beams to the lower world. They are called the four temperaments: heat, cold, moisture, and dryness.

And as the pen scatters the ink and forms it until the shape of *bismillāh* appears, this heat, cold, water, and earth moves the elements of these compounds. And as the paper receives the ink as it is spread upon it or collected, moistness enables the ink to be shaped while dryness becomes the keeper of that shape, preserving it, and does not let go of it. If there were no moistness, (the ink) could not be shaped (into words), and if there were no dryness, (the shape) could not be preserved.

And, when the pen has finished its work completely and brought its movements to an end, the form of *bismillāh* in accordance with the design that was in the repository of imagination appears with the aid of the eye. In the same manner, as heat and cold bring the elements of the ink into motion, the forms of plants, animals, etc. come into existence in this world through the agency of the angels in accordance with the image which is on the Preserved Tablet.

As the beginning of the action in all of the body springs from the soul and then is distributed to all the organs, so the beginning of the works in the world of physical bodies appears in the Throne. And, as the first receiver of that quality is the soul and the rest beneath it are attached to the soul so that it is thought that thou residest in thy soul, since the mastery of God Most High is by means of the Throne, it is thought that He resides in the Throne.

And, as thou hast gained mastery over thy soul and its affairs have been arranged, thou canst manage the kingdom of thy body. In the same way, when God Most High, with the creation of the Throne, became the Master of the Throne, The Throne stood straight and even. The management of (His) kingdom was arranged and the words came thus: *He established Himself upon the Throne, directing all things.* (Q. 10:3)

Know that all of this is truth and it has been made known to the perspicacious through external revelation, and the truth of this meaning was learned: *Truly God, may He be Honored and Glorified, created Man in His image.*

And know truly that no one other than kings knows kingship and sovereignty. If it were not that thou hadst been given rule over thine own kingdom (of the body), and given a brief copy of the kingship of the Lord of the Universe, thou wouldest never be able to comprehend the God

<sup>183</sup> "elements": *ummahāt*, literally, "mothers." Ghazzali is referring here to the four maternal or elementary qualities (*ummahāt-i chahār arkān*, *ummahāt-i suflā*) in man.

of the world. So, give thanks to that King Who created thee and gave thee a dominion and a kingdom, a proof-giver of His own kingdom, and for the soul that He made as thy Throne. He has made the animal spirit, the source of which is the soul, thine Israfil.<sup>184</sup> He has made the brain thy Pedestal and, out of thy repository of imaginings, a Preserved Tablet. He has made thy angels out of thine eyes and ears and all of thy senses. He has made thy sky and stars out of the dome of the brain, which is the source of the nerves of soul (*dil*). He has subordinated the elements to thy fingers and pen and ink. He has created thee unique, ineffable, and inscrutable, and has made thee the king over all. Then, He said to thee: "Take care! Neglect thy self and thy rule, for thou wilt have neglected thine own Creator! *For verily God created Man in His image; so know that and know thyself, O human being, and thou wilt know thy Lord.*"

#### **4. THE OBJECT OF THE EXPLANATION OF THE COMPARISON OF HUMAN SOVEREIGNTY WITH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

So, in all of this which was been said in explanation of the equaling of human sovereignty with the sovereignty of God Most High, reference has been made to two kinds of tremendous knowledge:

One is the knowledge of the human self, and the nature of the connection between human organs to its powers and attributes, and the nature of the connection of its attributes and powers to the soul. This is a lengthy study, the verification of which cannot be discussed in such a book as this.

The other concerns the relationship of the kingdom of the King of the World to the angels, the relationship of the angels to one another, and the relationship of the heavens, the Throne, and the Pedestal to them. That study is even lengthier.

The object of these intimations is that he who is astute should believe in all of these things and, through that (belief), come to know the greatness of God Most High. As for him who is dull-witted, he should know at least this much in order to appreciate how negligent and how defrauded he is to be deprived of the contemplation of such a Presence with so much beauty. What knowledge have people of the beauty of the Divine Presence itself? And what is this much that has been said (here) so that people may be able to understand?

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<sup>184</sup> Isrāfil: the archangel who will sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection.

## 5. THE PARABLE OF THE NATURALIST, THE ASTROLOGER, AND THE ANTS

The helpless, execrable naturalist and the deprived astrologer assign affairs to (aspects of) nature and the stars! They are like ants traveling over a piece of paper. They see the paper and they watch it become black and the patterns emerge upon it. They see the pen point and they become glad, exclaiming: "We know the truth of this matter! The pen is making this drawing!" This is a natural metaphor of their not knowing anything about motions except the lowest part.

Then, another ant comes upon the scene whose eyes are wider and able to see farther. He says: "Thou art mistaken. I see that this pen is being used; I see something else beyond it making the drawing." This pleased him, and he continued: "The truth is that I have learned that the artist is a finger, not the pen. The pen is controlled by the finger."

This is the likeness of the astrologer who sees even farther: He has learned that nature is controlled by the celestial bodies, but he has not learned that the celestial bodies are controlled by the angels at levels beyond, which he has not penetrated.

Just as this disparity has occurred between the astrologer and the naturalist in the physical world and from it a dispute, the same dispute that has arisen between those who have progressed in the world of spirits. For most people who have progressed from the physical world and have found something outside of physical bodies have halted at the first step and the way to the ascension to the world of spirits has been closed to them. In the world of sprits, which is the world of lights, there are steep passes and many veils (covering) the stairs. Some steps are like the stars, others are like the moon, and others like the sun. And these steps of the ascension are for those to whom the Kingdom of the Heavens is shown; as God, may He be praised and exalted, said about Abraham: *And thus We showed Abraham the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth*, (Q. 6:75) to the point where He said: *Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth*. (Q. 6:79)<sup>185</sup> And it was for this reason that the Prophet (S) said: *God has seventy veils of light; if He removed them, the splendors of His countenance would*

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<sup>185</sup> The full text of the passage Ghazzali is referring to is: *And thus We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty; When the night grew dark upon him he beheld a star. He said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: I love not things that set. And when he saw the moon uprising, he exclaimed: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: Unless my Lord guide me, I surely shall become one of the folk who are astray. And when he saw the uprising, he cried: This is my Lord! This is greater! And when it set he exclaimed: O my people! Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth.* (Q. 6:75-79)

*consume with fire all who gaze upon Him.* We have explained this in the book *Mishkatul Anwar wa Misfatul Asrar*. One should refer to it.<sup>186</sup>

The point is that thou understand that the poor naturalist who assigns everything to heat and cold is right: if they were not the intermediaries for divine causes, medical science would be useless. But he has made a mistake due to his shortsightedness and did not return to the way. He halted at the first landing stage and made of it a foundation, not a thing to be used;<sup>187</sup> he made it a lord, not a servant, while it is one of the lowest of servants—in the rank of footgear.<sup>188</sup>

And the astrologer was correct about including the stars among the causes. If that were not so, day and night would be the same, for the sun is a star, the source of the light and warmth of the world. And winter and summer would be the same, for the heat of summer is because (the sun) is near the zenith of the sky, while in winter it is farther away.<sup>189</sup> And that Lord Who has the power to create such a hot and bright sun; would it be strange if He created Saturn cold and dry, and He created Venus hot and moist? This does not detract from Islam. But the astrologer has erred where he has made of the stars the first principle and locus of empowerment and has not realized or understood that *the sun and the moon and the stars are subservient to His command.* (Q. 7:54)

Something subservient is that which is employed by others. Hence, (the stars) are workers, not for themselves, but are employed as the agents of the angels, just as the nerves are used to activate parts (of

<sup>186</sup> *Mishkāt al-Anwār wa Misfāt al-Asrār*: "The Niche for Lights. Translated by W.H.T. Gairdner, London, 1924, and reprinted by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan, 1952. [See also al-Ghazzali's *The Niche of Lights*, translated by David Buchman, Brigham Young University, 1998, in a bi-lingual edition.] Oddly, HK lists this as No. 52 in his chronological list of the works of Ghazzali, after *The Alchemy*, which is No. 45.

<sup>187</sup> That is, because of their short-sightedness, they thought that the first stage of knowledge was the goal, not a step to the higher stages.

<sup>188</sup> The lowest rank in an assembly, where the shoes are taken off and left.

<sup>189</sup> At midday on the summer solstice the sun is at the highest point it will reach in the sky during the year, while on the winter solstice it is at the lowest point it will reach at midday. The Tropic of Cancer represents the northernmost latitude at which the sun is directly overhead. How high it would actually go in other locales depends on the latitude of the observer. All of Iran and Iraq (where Ghazzali was active) lies north of the Tropic of Cancer; consequently, the sun would never be directly overhead. However Ghazzali could have seen it overhead if he happened to be at Makkah during the summer solstice as Makkah lies a little south of the Tropic of Cancer.

The distance between the earth and the sun is actually greater when it is summer in the Northern Hemisphere. However, because of the inclination of the axis of the earth responsible for the seasons, the rays of the sun travel a shorter distance through the earth's atmosphere, delivering more heat during the Northern summer, even though the distance between earth and sun is greater. It is the distance traveled by the sun's rays through the atmosphere that accounts for the seasons. In summer, it is shorter and therefore more intense, in winter, longer and less intense. In this sense, Ghazzali's cosmology is correct.

the body) by the power that is in the brain. The stars are among the lowliest of servants, even though they are at the level of captains like the four temperaments, and not at the level of shoes. They are like lowly servants, resembling (the relationship of) the pen to writing.

## 6. THE CAUSE OF DISPUTE AMONGST PEOPLE

Most disputes amongst people are like this: they all may have spoken the truth from one aspect of the truth; but they see some part and suppose that they have seen all. They are like the group of blind men who had heard that an elephant had come to their city. They went to learn about it, believing that they could comprehend it by touch. They laid their hands on the beast. The hand of one felt an ear, another a foot, another a thigh, and another a tusk. When they (later) encountered some other blind persons and were asked by them to describe the elephant, the one who had felt the leg said: "An elephant is like a pillar." The one who had felt the ear said: "It is like a carpet." Then the one who had touched the tusk said: "It is like stone." They were all speaking the truth, and they were all in error. They thought they had felt all of the elephant, but they had not.

Thus it is with the astrologer and the physician. The eye of each has fallen upon one of the servants of the Divine Presence. They have been amazed by its dominion and hegemony. Each said: "This is my king. *This is my Lord,*" (Q. 6:76) until that person to whom the way had been opened saw its deficiency and That Other behind it. He said: "This is under the Other. That which is beneath is not fit to be God. *I love not things which set.*" (Q. 6:76)<sup>190</sup>

## 7. THE LIKENING OF THE STARS AND THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC TO A ROYAL ESTABLISHMENT

The similitude of the stars, temperaments, and the constellations of the zodiac—which is divided into twelve parts—and the Throne, which is behind everything, is that of a king who has a private chamber in which his chief minister sits. There are screens around that chamber into which twelve windows have been let. At each window, one of the minister's deputies sits. Seven mounted captains patrol around these windows and listen to the instructions of the deputy that have been received from the minister. Four foot soldiers stand below (each of) the seven captains, their eyes fixed upon him, awaiting his excellency's command. Four lassoes have been placed in the hands of these four so that they may throw them. Some are sent to his presence by decree, and

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<sup>190</sup> See Note 185 above and the preceding chapter of the *Prolegomena*.

others are turned away from his presence. Some are receiving robes of honor, and others are being punished.

The Throne is a private chamber, the office of the chief minister of the kingdom. He is the closest angel.<sup>191</sup> That pavilion is the starry firmament. The twelve windows are the signs of the zodiac. The deputies of the chief minister are other angels who are lower in rank than the closest angels are. Each one of them has been assigned a task. The seven horsemen are the Seven Stars<sup>192</sup> who, like captains, always circle the windows and receive different kinds of commands from each of them. What we call the four elements—water, fire, earth, and air—are like the four footmen who do not travel from their own country. And the four temperaments—heat, cold, moisture, and dryness—are like the four lassoes in their hands.

For example, should a person's condition change and he turn his face away from the world; should anxiety and fear overwhelm his soul, and the blessing of the world become unpleasant to him; should he concern himself with the anxiety of the consequence of his actions, a doctor will say: "He is sick, and the cause is melancholia. The treatment is a decoction of dodder of thyme."

The naturalist will say: "The origin of this illness springs from a dry nature which is dominating his brain. The cause of this dryness is the winter air. He cannot be improved until spring comes and moisture overcomes the air."

The astrologer will say: "It is a black bile which has appeared in him. Black bile arises from the planet Mercury. It comes when (Mercury) is in an illaudable configuration with Mars. This condition will not be cured until Mercury conjuncts with the two Auspicious Planets (Jupiter and Venus) and Mars,<sup>193</sup> or they make a trine."<sup>194</sup> They all speak correctly, but *that is the limit of their knowledge*.

However, that which has been decreed in the Divine Presence for his happiness—two quick and knowledgeable captains, who are called Mercury and Mars,<sup>195</sup> have been sent rushing to one of the foot soldiers, the one who is called Air,<sup>196</sup> (commanding him) to shoot from the bow

<sup>191</sup> "closest angel(s)" (*mugarrabin*): sometimes equated with the cherubim of the Old Testament.

<sup>192</sup> The constellation of Ursa Major (the Big Dipper) that is always visible on a clear night in northern latitudes and pivots on the axis of the North Star.

<sup>193</sup> That is, until the three planets are all in the same sign of the zodiac. "The two Auspicious Planets" are Jupiter and Venus.

<sup>194</sup> Trine: When three planets are equidistant from each other on the ecliptic or zodiac; that is, they are from each other separated by 120 degrees of the circle of the zodiac.

<sup>195</sup> The reference is to the planets, not the Graeco-Roman gods after whom they have been named.

<sup>196</sup> "air" (*hawā*): one of the four elements mentioned above.

(an arrow) of Dryness<sup>197</sup> that strikes (the afflicted person's) head and brain to turn him away from the pleasures of the world and, with the scourges of fear and anxiety and the reins of will and seeking, to summon him to the Divine Presence—this is not in medicine or nature or in the stars. Rather, it exudes from the ocean of the knowledge of prophethood that encompasses all sides of the kingdom and all the agents, captains, and servants of the Lord. It is recognized who is responsible for which task, who acts upon which order, whither the people are summoned, and whence they are turned back.

So, what each one had said was true, but they had no knowledge of the secret of the ruler of the kingdom, nor of the secret of all of the kingdom's chief commanders. In this fashion, with misfortune, illness, and hardship, God Most High summons the people to the Divine Presence and says: "This is not an illness; it is the lasso of grace with which We summon Our Own saints to Our Presence: *For misfortune engages the prophets and then the saints and then next and the next.*"<sup>198</sup> Do not look at them with the eyes of the sick, for they are Ours; *I was ill and thou didst not visit me* with respect to them comes with this.

Thus the previous parable is the manner of a human's sovereignty in his own body, and this parable is also the manner of his own kingdom outside of his own body. With this spiritual knowledge too, he also obtains spiritual knowledge of himself. It was for this reason that we made the Spiritual Knowledge of the Self our first Topic.

## 8. CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEANING OF THE FOUR GLORIFICATIONS<sup>199</sup>

Now it is time for thee to learn the meaning of *Glory be to God, praise be to God, there is no god but God, and God is greater*. These four statements are brief and a comprehensive (summary) of the knowledge of the Divine.

When thou hast learned of His transcendence from thine own transcendence, thou hast learned (the meaning of) *Glory be to God*.

When thou hast learned the details of His sovereignty—that all causes and means are in its service as is a pen in the hand of a scribe—from thine own sovereignty, thou hast learned the meaning of *Praise be to God*; as there is no benefactor other than He, there is no praise and gratitude for other than He.

When thou hast learned there is no one other than He to command His own secret, thou hast learned (the meaning of) *There is no god but God*.

<sup>197</sup> "dryness" (*khushki*): one of the four temperaments mentioned above.

<sup>198</sup> "and the next and the next" (*thumma-l'amthal fa-l'amthal*), and so on down the line.

<sup>199</sup> "the Four Glorifications": *tasbihāt-i chahār-gānah*.

Now it is the time for thee to come to know the meaning of *God is Greater* and to know that with all this that thou hast known about God Most High, thou hast not known anything; for the meaning of the *Allāhu akbar* that thou sayest is "God is Greater." The true nature of this is greater than that people will be able to learn by comparison with themselves. It does not mean that He is greater<sup>200</sup> than everything else is, for there is nothing with Him for Him to be greater than. All existing things exist through the light of His existence. For the light of the sun is nothing other than the sun; one cannot say that the sun is greater than its own light! Indeed, the meaning of *God is Greater* is that He is greater than anything by which man can know Him by logical analogy.

*God forbid* that His sanctity and His Purity be like that of a human being, for He is free of resemblance to created things, much less man! *God forbid* that His sovereignty be like that of a human being over his own body; or that His attributes, such as knowledge and power, be likened to those of a man. Rather, all of these are illustrations so that a person, in accordance with human weakness, may in fact comprehend something of the beauty of the Divine Presence.

And the parable of this illustration is this: If a child ask us: "What is the pleasure of directorship, sovereignty, or running a kingdom like?" we say to him: "It is like hitting the ball with a polo stick or playing with a ball." (A child) knows nothing of pleasure, except such things. What he cannot grasp, we teach him by analogy to what he can (grasp). It is obvious that the pleasure of sovereignty is not in proportion to the pleasure of playing polo, but we may apply the words "pleasure" and "delight" to both. So, in name—from the point of view of that which they convey—they are same. For this reason, this illustration is suitable for children. Think of the function of these parables and illustrations in the same way. No one knows God perfectly and truly, save He Himself.

## 9. FOLLOWING THE RELIGIOUS LAW IS THE WAY OF HAPPINESS

An explanation of the knowledge of God Most High is lengthy and cannot be put in a book like this, as it would not be satisfying. Let this much suffice as a warning and as an encouragement to seek the perfection of this spiritual knowledge, as much as human capacity permits, for the perfection of (spiritual) happiness lies in that. Indeed, a

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<sup>200</sup> "larger": in Arabic *akbar* is the comparative form of *kabir* meaning (to quote Wehr) "great, big, large, sizable; bulky, voluminous, spacious; extensive, comprehensive; significant, considerable, formidable, huge, vast, enormous; powerful, influential, distinguished, eminent; important, old." When used with reference to God, it does not refer to physical size (Ghazzali's point here); rather it refers to His power, influence, and eminence.

person's (spiritual) happiness is in spiritual knowledge and in His service and worship.

An aspect of spiritual knowledge's being human happiness has been discussed above. As for the aspect that service and worship are causes of human happiness: when a person dies, his affair will be with God. *To Him are the return and the destination.* For any person who has to remain with another, his happiness lies in his loving the other. However much more he loves that person, his happiness is (that much) greater, because the pleasure and comfort of seeing his beloved is increased. The love of God Most High does not master a soul (*dil*) except through spiritual knowledge and much remembrance (of God).<sup>201</sup> Every one who loves another remembers him very often. The more he mentions that person, the more he loves him.<sup>202</sup> It is for this reason that the revelation came to David (A): *I am thy necessary remedy, so attend thy remedy.*<sup>203</sup> That is: "I am thy succor, I shall take care of thy affair. Do no neglect to remember Me for one moment."

Remembrance (of God) dominates the soul when one perseveres in acts of worship; the quiet of worship comes then and is obtained at that time when the bonds of carnal appetites are severed from the soul. The bonds of the carnal appetites are severed by abstaining from sins. As a result, the abstention from sin is the cause of the quietude of the soul, while performing devotion (to God) is the cause of the victory of remembrance. Both of these are the causes of that love which is the seed of (spiritual) happiness, and it is called "success."<sup>204</sup> As God Most High said: *He is successful who causes something to grow and remembers the name of his Lord, so pray.* (Q. 86:14-15)

<sup>201</sup> When use with respect to God, *dhikr* usually refers to a particular kind of meditation involving recitation of the Names, etc. It has a more general meaning of "mention, remembrance." Ghazzali uses the term first with respect to God and then—in the following sentence—with respect to human relationships, the first with a suggestion of both meanings, hence "remembrance" here.

<sup>202</sup> As noted in the Translator's Preface (q.v.), the fact that Persian does not have gender pronouns complicates the translation of this passage. The third-person pronoun *u* or, in another form *way*, can mean either he or she, or him or her, as the case may be. In translation, without a specific indication that the subject is female, it is customary to render it as "he/him" in accordance with the English use of the general indefinite masculine. In addition, the Persian verbal phrase for "to love" (*düst dâshtan*) is not so restricted as the English word "love," and can mean "like," as well. It includes love between the sexes as well as strong friendship without respect to gender. In this translation, "love" is usually used, with a meaning similar to that of the Greek *agape*, translated as "love" in the King James Version of the New Testament.

<sup>203</sup> Though Ghazzali calls this passage "revelation," it is not from the Quran. It is a term he uses through *The Alchemy of Happiness* when referring to non-Quranic revelations to prophets other than Muhammad (S).

<sup>204</sup> The word "success" (*falâh*) occurs in the call to formal prayer (*adhân*) in the phrase *hayya 'alâ l-falâh* (Come to success!).

As all acts cannot be worship—rather, some may and others not—it is not possible to refrain from all the appetites. It is not lawful to stop eating, for if one does not eat, one will die; and if one does not have sexual intercourse, there will be no progeny. So, while it is appropriate to restrain some appetites, others should be satisfied. Therefore, one should be separated from the other by a limit.

This limit is not devoid of two conditions which a human being gets either through his own intellect, desire, and independent judgment;<sup>205</sup> or from another. It is impossible that it should be left to his choice or independent judgment. Why? Because his desire will master him and always conceal the way to God from him. Whatever he desires will appear in the image of correctness. Therefore, the reins of choice should not be placed in his hands; rather, they should be in the hands of another. But, just anyone is not fit for this; instead, he should be of the most perspicacious of men. And they are the prophets, may the God bless them all.

Thus, by necessity, following the Divine Law and observing the boundaries of its rules are necessary on the road to (spiritual) happiness. That is the meaning of service. Anyone who exceeds the limits set by religion in his behavior falls into the danger of destruction. For this reason God Most High said: *And he who transgresses God's limits, verily he wrongs his soul.* (Q. 65:1)

## 10. THE ERROR AND IGNORANCE OF THE LIBERTINES

Those who are Libertines<sup>206</sup> have erroneously abrogated the limits of God's command. Their ignorance has seven forms:

THE FIRST FORM is the ignorance of some who do not believe in (the existence of) God, *may He be honored and glorified*. Why? Because they have searched for Him in the treasury of imagination and whim and sought His quality and nature. Since they have not found (these), they deny Him and have shunted matters to the stars and physical nature. They have supposed that this (human) person and the other animate beings—this marvelous world with all of its wisdom and arrangement, has come into existence by itself, or has itself always existed; or that it is a natural accident, having no knowledge of itself much less anything else! They are like the person who looks at a specimen of fine writing

<sup>205</sup> “independent judgment”: *ijtihād*, from the same Arabic root as *jihād* (*j-h-d*). *Ijtihād* has a general meaning of “effort, striving,” and also a technical meaning of independent judgment in religious law and theological matters, a stage achieved only after considerable study and reflection. Ghazzali chooses the word because of this double implication.

<sup>206</sup> “Libertines” (*ibāḥat*): See Note 165.

and thinks that it wrote itself without (the hand of) an able, knowledgeable, and willing scribe; or that it has always existed so written! How can a person so utterly blind perceive the way of (spiritual) happiness? The manner of the error of the naturalist and the astrologer has been discussed above.<sup>207</sup>

THE SECOND FORM is some people's ignorance of the Hereafter. They have decided that man is like a plant or other animals. When he dies, he becomes non-existent. There is no castigation for him, no punishment, and no spiritual reward. The cause of this (position) is (their) ignorance of the one's own self. They know themselves as they know donkeys, cattle, or plants. They do not know the soul (*rūh*) which is the reality of man! That is everlasting and never dies, but the body will be taken back from him. That is called "death." The truth of this will be discussed in the Fourth topic, *if God Most High wills it.*

THE THIRD FORM is the ignorance of those persons who believe in God and in the Hereafter, (but) with a weak belief. However, they do not understand the significance of the Religious Law. They say: "What does God, *may He be exalted and glorified*, need of my worship, and what harm is there in my sinning? He is a King and able to do without the people's worship. (My) worship and sin are the same to Him." And these ignoramuses still see that in the Quran He says: *And he who purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own good;* (Q. 35:18) *And whoever strives hard, strives hard for himself;* (Q. 29:6) *Whoever does good, it is for his own soul!* (Q. 41:46)

This backslider is ignorant of the Religious Law; he supposes that the meaning of the Religious Law is that work must be done on behalf of God Most High, not for oneself. It is as though a sick man does not abstain (from something injurious) and says: "What difference does it make to the doctor whether I obey his orders or not?" This is correct, but (the sick man) perishes, not because of the need of a doctor; but because his way to ruin was in not abstaining. The doctor had guided him and showed him the way. How does the guide<sup>208</sup> suffer loss when (the sick man) destroys himself? Just as an illness of the body is the cause of destruction in this world, so an illness of the soul will cause wretchedness in the next world. And, just as medicine and self-restraint are the cause of bodily health, so devotion, spiritual knowledge, and abstention from sin are the cause of spiritual health. *None will be saved "except him who brings to God a sound heart."* (Q. 26:89)<sup>209</sup>

<sup>207</sup> See Chapter 5 of Topic Three above.

<sup>208</sup> "guide": the doctor.

<sup>209</sup> Only the Arabic between the quotation marks is from the Quran.

THE FOURTH FORM is also the ignorance of some people of the Religious Law, but from another aspect. They have said: "The Law has been ordained in order to cleanse the soul of anger, carnal appetite, and hypocrisy; but this is not possible, because man has been created from these. This is just like a person who wants to change the color of a black carpet to white! Busying oneself with such a task is to seek the impossible."

These fools did not know that that was not the reason for the enjoining of the Religious Law. Rather, it was enjoined (upon us) to control anger and carnal passion and to hold them in check so that they do not overcome the Law and reason, so that they not become mutinous, to preserve the limits of the Law and to avoid major sins, so that He may forgive us our minor sins. This is possible and many persons have achieved this.

The Prophet (S) did not say: "There must not be anger and there must not be carnal appetite." He had nine wives and used to say: "*I am a human being. I anger as human beings anger.*" And God Most High said: *They control their anger and are forgiving toward mankind.* (Q. 3:134) He praised the person who swallows his anger, not the person who has no anger itself.

THE FIFTH FORM is those persons' ignorance of God Most High's attributes. They say: "God Most High is merciful and generous. He will show mercy to us with each of His attributes." They do not know just as He is generous, He is harsh in His punishment. They do not see that even though He is generous and merciful, many people in this world are afflicted, ill, and hungry. They do not see that so long as they do not cultivate the land or engage in business, they obtain no wealth; or that until they make the effort, they do not learn. They make no omission when it comes to seeking (the wealth) of this world and they do not say: "God Most High is generous and merciful. He will give us our sustenance without working the land or engaging in trade," even though God Most High has guaranteed our sustenance and says: *And there is not a beast on the earth but the sustenance thereof depends upon God.* (Q. 11:6) and entrusts the affair of the Hereafter to action, saying: *And man has only that for which he makes an effort.* (Q. 53:39) Since they do not believe in His generosity, they do not cease from seeking the wealth of the world and the world itself. That which they say concerning the Hereafter is on the tip of the tongue and inspired by Satan, and is not genuine.

THE SIXTH FORM is their ignorance of their own pride. Their vanity is that they say: "We have attained a degree in which our sins are

not the cause of loss. Our religion has become two jugs of water<sup>210</sup> and cannot be tainted." Most of these fools, since they are worthless, will harbor a lifelong enmity for anyone who diminishes their self-opinion or demolishes their pride by a word. Should a single morsel of that which they covet slip by them, their world becomes narrow and dark. And when did the pretensions of these simpletons, who have not yet become two jugs of water in manliness and who pay no attention to such things, become uncontested?

So, if, for example, a person has also become thus so that enmity, appetite, hypocrisy, and anger do not approach him; he is also deluded by this claim. What? Does his rank surpass that of the prophets? They used to lament and weep for their mistakes and sins, and worked to atone for them. The friends of the Companions (of the Prophet) shunned minor sins; indeed, out of fear of suspicion, they fled from what is lawful! So, how does this fool know that he has not been duped by Satan? And (does he dare to think that) his rank has surpassed theirs?

If one says: "The prophets were like that, but what they were doing, they were doing for the good of the people"; then why does he not do the same for the good of the people when he sees that everyone he is looking at is being corrupted? If one says: "The corruption of the people does not harm me"; then why did it hurt the Prophet (S)? If there was no harm, why did he keep himself in the torment of the fear of God and throw down a single date because it had given in charity for the poor? If he had eaten it, how would those people, for whom the eating of it would have been lawful, have been harmed? If there were a harm in that, why would cups of (unlawful) wine not harm that fool?

Indeed! His degree is not above that of the Messenger of God (S), no more than the degree of hundred cups of wine (would be) over the degree of a single date! So, how does he posit himself to be an ocean so that a hundred cups of wine will not corrupt him, while he posits the Messenger to be a mere jug of water that would be corrupted by a single date? It is a time when Satan plays with his whiskers and the fools of the world make an object of ridicule out of him. He is a fool about whom the intelligent tell stories or at whom they laugh.

However, it is the great ones of religion who recognize that he who has not imprisoned his passion is not a man. Instead, he is a beast of burden. They know this in this way, that the human self is cunning and deceitful. He makes a false claim who boasts: "(My carnality) is under my control and I am superior to it." Ask him to prove it. Of course, there is no proof of his rectitude other than that (the self) is not under its own

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<sup>210</sup> "two jugs of water" (*dū qullah*): It is the minimum amount of water considered by the Shafi'i school to be necessary for purification, provided that its color, taste, and smell are not altered. In other words, these people assert that their faith is above pollution by externals. They consider themselves above contamination by sin.

rule, but under the rule of Religious Law. If he always devotes himself to its obedience, then he is speaking the truth. If he is always looking for leniency, (specious) interpretation, or tricks.<sup>211</sup> He is the servant of Satan even though he pretends to sainthood. This proof must be sought from him until his last breath; if not, he will become haughty and deceived. He will be ruined and not know it. The dedication of the self to following the Religious Law is still the first step of being a Muslim.

THE SEVENTH FORM arises from heedlessness and the carnal appetite, not from ignorance. The Libertines are a people who have passed over these misgivings. They have not heard anything themselves, but a group are seen traveling the road of libertinism, immoral behavior, and uttering spurious things. They claim to be Sufis and saints and wear their garments. This suits their nature, for it has been conquered by carnal appetite and sloth. They are not content with behaving immorally and saying: "We shall be punished for this," for then immorality would be bitter to their souls. Instead, they say: "This is not really immorality; it is just a groundless accusation and talk."

They do not know the meaning of "accusation" or of "talk." This is a man heedless and full of carnal appetite. Satan finds his gratification in him. He will not be corrected with speech, because his doubts have not come from speech. Most of these people are among those about whom God Most High said: *Lo! We have placed coverings on their hearts so that they understand not, and in their ears a deafness. And though thou call them to the guidance, but they will never be led aright.* (Q. 18:57) *And when thou rememberest thy Lord alone in the Quran, they turn their backs in disdain.* (Q. 17:46) Therefore, dealing with such people is done better by the sword than by the argument of reason.

Let this much suffice about the scandal of the Libertines. In this Topic it has been said that the reason for all these things is the ignorance of one's own self, or the ignorance of God, or the ignorance about traveling the Way, called the Religious Law, from the self to God. When such ignorance is in agreement with (one's) nature, it can only be expunged with difficulty.

It is for this reason that there is a group of people who travel the road of Liberalism without any doubt and say: "We are perplexed." If thou sayest to one of them: "By what art thou perplexed?" he cannot say, for he is not seeking anything nor does he have any doubts. He is like the person who says to the doctor: "I am sick," but does not tell him what his sickness is. He cannot be cured until his sickness is diagnosed. It is right

<sup>211</sup> "looking for leniency, interpretation, and tricks": trying to look for ways to escape the duties imposed by the Religious Law through tortured interpretations of the letter that distort the spirit of the law. Regrettably, even the Law of God is not immune from the attacks of unscrupulous interpreters and legal chicanery.

to say to him: "Be astonished by anything thou wishest, but doubt not that thou wert created, that thy Creator is Powerful, and that He can do anything He desires in the universe." Then this concept should be made known to him by proofs, as has been explained above.

## THE THIRD TOPIC: THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS WORLD

### 1. THE REASON FOR MAN'S BEING IN THE WORLD

Know that the world is a stage of the stages on the way of religion, a passing place for travelers to the Divine Presence, a decked-out market placed at the edge of the desert from which the travelers take provisions.

The world and the Hereafter comprise two states: that which is prior to death and nearer to thee and which is called the world; and that which is after death, called the Hereafter. The purpose of the world is the provisioning for the Hereafter. A human being is created plain and deficient at the beginning of his creation, but has the potential to achieve perfection and to make the celestial image the design of his soul in order to be fitting for the Divine Presence, in the sense that he finds a way to become one of the beholders of the beauty of the Presence. This is the farthest limit of his (spiritual) happiness. This is his Paradise. This is why he was created!

However, he cannot become a beholder so long as his eyes are not opened, nor can he perceive that Beauty. That comes with spiritual knowledge. The key to the knowledge of the Divine Beauty is knowledge of the wonders of the divine handiwork. And the (five) human sensory organs are the first key to the divine handiwork. These senses would not have been possible except in this body compounded of water and dust.

So, this is the reason he has fallen into the world of water and dust, so that he may gather his provisions and obtain the spiritual knowledge of God Most High with the key of the knowledge of his own self and the knowledge of all quarters of the world<sup>212</sup> perceptible to the senses. As long as a person possesses these senses and they spy out things for him, he is said to be "in the world." When he says farewell to these senses, while he endures as do those things that are the essence of his attributes.<sup>213</sup> Then, it is said that he has gone to the Hereafter. Consequently, this is the reason for his being in the world.

### 2. THE TRUE NATURE, BANE, AND PURPOSE OF THE WORLD

So, a person needs two things in the world: one is to obtain nourishment for his soul to protect it from the causes of destruction; and

<sup>212</sup> *jumlah-yi āfāq*: literally, "all horizons." "Horizons" here can refer to all quarters of heaven and earth; all perceptible things.

<sup>213</sup> This passage refers to the death of the body (and the physical senses with it) and the survival of the essential person; that is, his soul and intangible attributes.

the other is to obtain nourishment for his body to protect it from the Destroyers.<sup>214</sup> The nourishment of the soul is the spiritual knowledge and love of God Most High. The nourishment of every thing is according to its nature, for that is its natural disposition. It has previously been made clear that this is the natural disposition of a human being. The reason for the destruction of a human being is his becoming absorbed in something other than God Most High.

The body must be tended by the soul, for the body is mortal while the soul is immortal. The body for the soul is like the camel for the pilgrim on the road to perform the Pilgrimage; the camel is for the pilgrim, not the pilgrim for the camel, even though the pilgrim is necessarily obligated to provide it with fodder, water, and covering until he reaches the Ka'bah and is relieved of this trouble. However, his obligation must be according to need. If he spends all of this time in feeding, adorning, and tending (the camel), the caravan will leave him behind and he will perish. In the same manner, if a person spends all of his time tending his body so that he will increase his strength and keep dangerous things away, he will be deprived of his own (spiritual) happiness.

The body needs three things in the world: food, clothing, and shelter. Food is for nourishment; clothing and shelter are for cold and heat, to prevent them from killing him. A person's needs for his body are no more than these; indeed, these are the foundations of the world itself.

The nourishment of the soul is spiritual knowledge, the more the better, while the nourishment of the body is food. Shouldst thou eat too much of it, it may cause thy demise. However, it is for this that God Most High has appointed a sensual appetite over a human being to prompt him with respect to food, clothing, and shelter, lest his body—his steed—perish. This appetite is created in such a way so that it does not limit itself, but (continually) desires more. The intellect has been created to restrain it, and the Religious Law has been sent by means of the tongues of the prophets to elucidate it.

However, the carnal appetite was created first, for an infant has need of it. The intellect was created after it. Thus, appetite took its place from the beginning and became established firmly. It continuously resists the intellect and the Law, which came after it so as not to permit his totality to engage in the quest for food, clothing, and shelter and thereby forget his self and not know for what this food and clothing are needed and why he came into this world and (so as not to) forget the nourishment of the soul, which is the provision for the Hereafter. From all this, thou knowest the true nature, bane, and purpose of the world. Now, thou shouldst learn the branches and activities of the world.

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<sup>214</sup> "the Destroyers" (*muhlikāt*): See the Third Pillar.

### 3. THE BASES OF THE WORLD: FOOD, CLOTHING, AND SHELTER

Know that when thou examinest the details of the world, thou wilt find that it is comprised of three things: (1) first, the most noble of things that have been created upon the face of the earth, such as plants, metals, and animals. In reality, (2) land is necessary for dwellings and for the use of agriculture. Metals, such as copper, bronze, and iron, (are necessary) for tools; and (3) animals for transportation and food. A human being has busied his soul and body with these things, be it the soul busying itself with its love them and their acquisition, or the body with their improvement and taking care of them.<sup>215</sup>

Traits that cause its ruin, such as greed, miserliness, envy, enmity, etc., will appear in the soul as a result of its being engaged with the love for these things. And these traits in the soul arise from the entanglement of the body with (the world) to the extent that one forgets one's self, devoting all to worldly affairs.

Just as the bases of the world are three things—food, clothing, and shelter—the bases of the arts, which are a human necessity—are also three things: farming, weaving, and construction. Each one of these has branches. Some are preparatory, such as the cotton carder and the spinner who prepares (the thread) for the weaver; while others finish the work, such as the tailor who finishes what the weaver has begun. All of these require implements made of wood, iron, leather, and the like; thus, the blacksmith, carpenter, and the cobbler come into existence.

When all of these have appeared, they need to help each other, for each person cannot do all of these jobs by himself. Therefore, they come together. The tailor does work for the weaver and the blacksmith; the blacksmith takes care of the needs of the other two. In this fashion, each one works for the others.

Eventually, transactions appear among them from which antagonisms arise, for each person may not be satisfied with his own portion, and they may attack each other. As a result, they find themselves in the need for three more arts: one, the art of politics and rule; two, the art of adjudication and government; and three, the art of religious jurisprudence<sup>216</sup> by which the law of mediation among the people may be known. Each one of these is a trade, although most of their work is not related to the hands.

<sup>215</sup> AA points out in a note that while Ghazzali mentions the first of the three things that are the basis of the world, he apparently does not mention the second and third. By careful scrutiny of the corresponding passage of *The Revival*, AA concludes that the second and third points are engagement of the soul and body respectively with the world.

<sup>216</sup> "religious jurisprudence" (*fiqh*): knowledge, especially of religion and jurisprudence; theology. It comes from the Arabic root *f-q-h* meaning "to understand, comprehend, have legal knowledge." The (religious) jurisprudent is a *faqih* (pl. *fuqahā*).

In this manner, the vocations of the world have multiplied and become interrelated. The people have lost themselves among them and do not know that the root of all of these was no more than three things: food, clothing, and shelter. All of this became necessary for (satisfying) those three needs, and those three are necessary for the body, and the body is necessary for the soul, to serve as its vehicle. The soul is necessary for God. But they forget themselves and they forget God, like the pilgrim who forgets himself, the Ka'bah, and (the object of) his journey and spends all of his time in taking care of his camel!

Therefore, the world and the real nature of the world is what has been said above. He who is not prepared and alert, does not have his eye fixed on the Hereafter, and is not occupied with the world more than necessary, has not come to know the world. The cause of this is ignorance, as the Prophet (S) said: "The world is more of a sorcerer than were Harut and Marut,"<sup>217</sup> beware of it!"

Since the world is so bewitching, it behooves us to know its treachery and deceit, and to enlighten the people with examples of its works. Accordingly, it is now the time for thee to hear some of these examples.

#### **4. EXAMPLES OF THE SORCERY OF THE WORLD AND THE HEEDLESSNESS OF ITS INHABITANTS**

**THE FIRST EXAMPLE:** The first sorcery of the world is that it shows itself to thee so that thou suppose that the world is itself unmoving) and is settled down firmly with thee, yet it is continuously fleeing from thee! However, it moves gradually, and bit by bit. It is like a shadow: when thou lookest at it, it appears still; but it is always moving. It is obvious that thy life is doing the same, always passing. Gradually, moment by moment, it is growing less. That is the world that is fleeing from thee and bidding thee farewell; but thou art unaware!

**ANOTHER EXAMPLE:** Its spell is that it feigns friendship in order to make of thee its lover. Moreover, it pretends to thee to have come to a living arrangement with thee and will not go to another. Then, suddenly, it becomes thine enemy! It is like a depraved, worthless woman who tricks men into becoming her lovers. Then she takes them home and kills

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<sup>217</sup> Hārūt and Mārūt: Two angels mentioned in the Quran (2:102), who displayed compassion for the predicament of mankind. They were given the capacity to feel as humans do and were sent to earth to be tempted. They sinned and were offered punishment in this world or the Hereafter. They chose the punishment of this world. Islamic tradition supplies stories of their coming to earth in human form and being undone by its temptations.

them. Jesus<sup>218</sup> (A), in his own revelations, saw the world in the shape of an old woman. He asked her: "How many husbands hast thou had?" She replied: "Too many to count." He said: "Did they die or divorce thee?" She said: "Neither; I slew them all." Jesus said: "How strange it is that those other fools who saw what thou hadst done to the others, nevertheless desired thee and did not learn the lesson."

**ANOTHER EXAMPLE:** The sorcery of the world is that its exterior is adorned attractively while everything of its calamities and sufferings is concealed, so that the ignorant will look at the appearance and be deluded. Its similitude is the veiled, ugly old crone who dresses in garments of silk brocade and wears many beautiful ornaments so that anyone who sees her from a distance will be attracted to her. But when he lifts the veil, he is filled with regret and sees her infamies.

In the Traditions it is related that the world will be summoned on the Day of Resurrection in the form of an ugly, toothless, green-eyed old hag so that the people may look at her and say: "*We seek refuge with God!* What is this, with this disgrace and with this ugliness?" They will reply: "This is the world for which ye envied and fought each other, shed blood, and betrayed the bonds of kinship. This is what attracted you!" At the moment she is thrown into hell, she will cry: "O Lord God! Where are my lovers?" He will command that they be thrown into hell after her.

**ANOTHER EXAMPLE:** A person who takes into account how long was the part of eternity when he did not exist in the world, and how long he will be in eternity when he is not in the world, and how few these days are between pre-eternity and unending eternity,<sup>219</sup> he knows that the metaphor of the world is the road of a traveler. At the beginning it is a cradle and at the end a grave. In between there are a limited number of stations. While he is traveling, every year is like a station, every month a parasang,<sup>220</sup> and every day a mile,<sup>221</sup> and every breath a step. For one (person) a parasang of the journey is left, for another less than a parasang, for others more or less. And that person, who sits calmly, as it

<sup>218</sup> In Islamic belief, the crucifixion of Jesus was an illusion or a deception. Jesus himself escaped and became the model of the Sufi world-traveler. There exists a much-venerated tomb in Kashmir described as his final resting place. Many of the unfamiliar sayings and stories about him attributed to him in Islamic literature come from the considerable body of non-canonical gospels and miracle-books that circulated in the early Christian centuries before being rejected and partly suppressed by developing Christian orthodoxy. Others probably developed locally where Jesus is presumed to have passed.

<sup>219</sup> See Note 266.

<sup>220</sup> *parasang*: a distance of about six kilometers or three and a half miles, something like the "league" of three miles. It was the average distance a caravan or an army was supposed to be able to travel in an hour under ordinary conditions.

<sup>221</sup> Ghazzali uses the word *mil*, which is a third of a parasang.

were, as though he would always be here, makes arrangements for ten years in the future that he will not need—in two days, he will be under the earth!

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: Know that the similitude of the inhabitants of the world in the enjoyment of what they obtain compared with that disgrace and sorrow they will see from the world in the Hereafter is the person who gorges himself on delicious, fat, and sweet food until he ruins his stomach. Then, he perceives a stench and vileness in his bowels, his breath, and his stools. Then, he is put to shame and regrets that the pleasure is gone but the unpleasantness remains: the more delicious the food, the more fetid the stools. However much the pleasure of the world is greater, the greater will be the disgrace in the end. This itself will become evident when the soul is torn (from the body). Whoever enjoyed more the ease, orchards, gardens, serving girls and boys, gold, and silver, will, at the time of death, have more sorrow, tribulation, and torment than that person who possessed less. That sorrow and torment will not disappear at death; rather it will increase, for that love (of the world) is (become) an attribute of the soul, and the soul will endure and not die.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: Know that the affairs of the world which come before us seem trivial. People think that their work will not take long, but perhaps a minor thing will bring about a hundred things. Jesus, on whom be peace, says: “The seeker of the world is like one who drinks water from the sea. The more he drinks the thirstier he becomes. He drinks until he perishes, and the thirst never passes from him.” Our Prophet (S) says: “Just as it is not possible for a person to enter the water without getting wet, it is not possible for a person to engage in the affairs of the world without getting tainted.”

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: The similitude of the person who comes into the world is that of the person who becomes the guest of a host whose custom it is to always keep his hall prepared for guests. He invites them, group after group. He places a golden platter before him. On it are sugarplums and a silver censer with fragrant aloeswood and incense to perfume him and make him pleasant-smelling. He eats the sugarplums and passes the tray and censer to others. Each who knows the etiquette and is intelligent in turn sniffs the aloeswood and incense, and perfumes himself and eats of the sugarplums and passes the tray and censer to the next in good spirits. (Then) he expresses his gratitude and departs. But the person who is a fool thinks that they were given to him and takes them with him. When they are taken back from him at the time of departure, he is unhappy and displeased, and he protests!

The world, too, is like an inn, a stopping place for travelers so that they may gather the provisions for the rest of the journey. They should not covet anything in the inn.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: The inhabitants of the world with their attachment to the affairs of the world and their forgetting the Hereafter are like some people on a ship who come to an island. They go ashore to take care of their physical needs and for purification. The captain calls out to them: "Do not delay; just purify yourselves. The ship will depart shortly."

The people spread out over the island. The more intelligent purify themselves quickly and return. They find the ship empty, so they occupy the pleasanter and more favorable places. Another group lose themselves in the marvels of the island and stand admiring the fine flowers, songbirds, and colorful, patterned pebbles. When they return, they find no open places and sit crowded together in the dark, and they suffer from that.

Another group does not content themselves with merely looking. They collect some of the fine, strange, colorful stones and bring them back to the ship with them. They find no places to sit comfortably, so sit pressed together. They hang the colorful stones and buttercups around their necks. After one or two days, those beautiful colors change and become dark. The odor of the flowers begins to become unpleasant. They cannot find any place to throw them down. They regret what they have done and bear their sorrow for it on their necks.

Another group falls under the spell of the island and goes off like tourists until they are so far from the ship that they do not hear the captain's summons. They are left on the island until some of them perish from hunger, and the others are killed by wild beasts.

The first group are like the abstemious believers, and the last are like the unbelievers who have forgotten God, self, and the Hereafter. All of those others have given themselves to the world: *They have chosen the life of the world over the Hereafter.* (Q. 16:107) The two groups in between are like rebels who have preserve the basis of faith, but have not abstained from the world: one group took pleasure in poverty, and the other group accumulated many comforts with pleasure, until they became a heavy burden.

## 5. NOT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD IS BLAMEWORTHY

With this previous censure of the world, think thou not that everything in the world is forbidden; rather, there are things in the world that are not of the world. In what way? Knowledge and deeds are in the world, but not of it, for they accompany a person to the Hereafter. Knowledge itself will endure with him exactly (as it is); however, as for

one's deeds, though they will not endure precisely as they were, their effect will remain. This is divided into two parts: one is the cleanliness and purity of the essence of the soul, which are attained by means of abandoning sin: and the other is the fondness for the remembrance of God Most High that is attained by scrupulousness in worship. So, these two are among the good deeds that endure, as God Most High said: *And the enduring good deeds are better in thy Lord's sight for reward.* (Q. 19:76)

The pleasure of knowledge, the pleasure of secret conversation,<sup>222</sup> and the pleasure of the fondness for remembering God Most High are better than all other pleasures. They are in the world, but not of it. Consequently, all pleasures are not blameworthy, just the pleasure which passes or does not endure. These too are not all censured, for there are two kinds: one is that which, although of the world and perishing after death, such as food, conjugal intercourse, clothing, and shelter in measure according to need, yet is a helper for the work of the Hereafter, for knowledge and deeds, and for the increase of (the number of) believers, as this is a condition of the road to the Hereafter. Every person who is satisfied with this much of the world and whose aim from it is rendering aid to religious work is not worldly.

Therefore, (those things) of the world are reprehensible the purpose of which is not to further the work of religion; indeed, they are the cause of heedlessness, hubris, the establishment of the soul in this world, and the abhorrence of the next world. It was for this that the Prophet (S) said: "The world and all that is in it is accursed save the remembrance of God Most High, and that which supports him in that."

Let this much suffice in explanation of the true nature and purpose of the world. We shall speak about the rest in the Third Pillar about the Principles of Conduct which is called *Obstacles on the Path of Religion.*<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> "secret conversation (with God)": *munājāt*.

<sup>223</sup> See Chapter Two of the Third Pillar.

## THE FOURTH TOPIC: THE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEREAFTER

### 1. PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEAVEN AND HELL

Know that no one recognizes the true nature of the Hereafter until he first recognizes the true nature of death. He does not know the true nature of death until he knows the true nature of life. He does not recognize the true nature of life until he recognizes the true nature of the soul (*rūh*); and the spiritual knowledge of the true nature of the soul is the spiritual knowledge of the true nature of his own self (*nafs*), about which something has already been explained.

Know from what has been said before, a person is compounded of two basic things: one, the soul; the other, the physical body. The soul is like the rider and the body like the steed. By means of the body, this soul has a state in the Hereafter that is (either) destined for Paradise or destined for hell. By reason of its own essence, it also has a state in which the body does not participate, and it is destined for (either) spiritual happiness or misery. We name that ease and pleasure of the soul which is unconnected to the body "Spiritual Paradise," and we call the sorrow, pain, and misery of the soul which is unconnected to the body "Spiritual Fire."

As for the heaven and hell when the body is present, that itself is obvious. The harvest of the former is rivers, trees, the pure ones,<sup>224</sup> food, drink, etc.; while the harvest of hell is fire, reptiles, scorpions, the tree of Zaqqūm,<sup>225</sup> etc. The descriptions in the Quran and Traditions of both of these are well-known and are comprehensible by all, while the particulars have been discussed in the book *The Remembrance of Death in The Revival*.<sup>226</sup> We shall confine ourselves here to an exposition about

<sup>224</sup> "pure ones" (*hūr*): They are described in Q. 55:56-78 as pure damsels of great beauty whom no man or jinn has touched. The word *hūr*, the plural of *hawrā*, (the source of the English "houri" and attendant fantasies) refers to the brightness of their eyes, the whites being extremely white and contrasting sharply with the darkness of the pupil and the iris. The Arabic verb *hawwara* means "to bleach."

<sup>225</sup> The tree of Zaqqūm is mentioned and described several places in the Quran. For example:

*"Is this better entertainment or the tree of Zaqqūm? Surely, We have made it a trial for the wrongdoers. It is a tree that grows in the bottom of hell. Its produce is, as it were, the heads of serpents. Then truly they will eat of it and fill (their) bellies with it."* (Q. 37:62-66)

It has been identified by later scholars with several thorny and pungent trees, but these identifications may have been inspired by the Quranic verses. The Arabic root of the word Zaqqūm (*z-q-m*) refers to "swallowing, gulping, gobbling (food)."

<sup>226</sup> A reference, of course, to Ghazzali's own *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

the true nature of death and refer to the meaning of spiritual heaven and hell, something that not every one knows.

That which He said—*I have prepared for My righteous worshippers that which the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, and which has not occurred to the heart of man*—is about spiritual heaven.<sup>227</sup> From within the soul, there is an opening to the spiritual world through which these sublime realities are revealed. No doubt shall remain about this. The clear certainty of the happiness and the punishment of the Hereafter is made manifest to the person for whom this way is opened, not by way hearsay; rather, by way of perception and witnessing. Indeed, just as a physician recognizes whether the body is well or miserable in this world—that which is called good health or illness, for which there are reasons such as restraint and abstention (for the former) and over-eating and self-indulgence (for the latter)—in the same manner, it becomes plain with this witnessing that there is a happiness and a distress for the soul (*dil*); that is, the spirit (*rūh*). Worship and spiritual knowledge nourish that happiness, while ignorance and sin is poisonous to it. That is an extremely rare knowledge.

Most of those who are called religious scholars neglect this. Indeed, they deny it! They do not go beyond the heaven and hell of the body. They know nothing about the knowledge of the Hereafter save (what has come down to them of) by report and authority. We have written many long books in Arabic<sup>228</sup> in the explanation and investigation of this proof. In this book, enough is said so that a quick-witted person, whose mind is clear of contamination, fanaticism, and blind authority, will regain it. The affair of the Hereafter will become firm and strong in his soul, but the belief of most people in the Hereafter is weak and unstable.

## 2. THE TRUE NATURE OF DEATH

If thou wishest to know something about the true nature of death; that is, what its meaning is; know that a person has two spirits. One is of the nature of the spirit of animals, and we call it the “animal spirit.”<sup>229</sup> The other is of the kind of the spirit of the angels and we call that the “human spirit.”<sup>230</sup> The heart (*dil*) is the source of the animal spirit—that lump of flesh placed to the left (in thy chest). It is as tenuous as a vapor from the humors within the animal.<sup>231</sup> An even temperament comes from

<sup>227</sup> See Note 176. The quotation in Arabic is a Tradition, not a verse from the Quran.

<sup>228</sup> Another reference to Ghazzali's own *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

<sup>229</sup> “animal spirit”: *rūh-i haywāni*.

<sup>230</sup> “human spirit”: *rūh-i insāni*.

<sup>231</sup> “the humors” (*akhlāt*): the four humors of he body: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Section Four below.

that. From the heart, it reaches the brain and all parts of the body by means of the arteries that have pulse and movement. This spirit is the bearer of the powers of sensory perception and motion. When it reaches the brain its heat decreases and it becomes mild. The eye receives its power of sight from it; the ear receives its power of hearing from it, and so on with the other senses.

The similitude (of the animal spirit) is a lamp that moves about a house. Wherever its goes, the walls of the house become illuminated by it. So, as the illumination from the lamp appears on the walls, in the same manner the power of sight, hearing, and the other senses of this spirit in the external organs by the power of God, *may He be praised and exalted*, become manifest. Should an obstruction or blockage occur in any of these arteries, those organs further down remain inactive and paralyzed. There is no longer any power of perception or movement in them. A physician endeavors to open such blockages.

This spirit is like the flame of the lamp. The heart is like the wick. Food is like the oil—should the oil be exhausted, the lamp dies; and if no nourishment is received, the balanced temperament of this spirit deteriorates and the animal dies. In the same way, if there is oil, but the wick draws up too much of it, it is consumed and no longer draws the oil. In this way, after a long period of time, the heart no longer accepts food. And in the same way, if something strikes the lamp, it will go out, even though the oil and wick are in place. So too, if an animal suffers a great injury, it will die.

This spirit, as long as its humors are in balance—a necessary prerequisite—receives delicate images, such as the powers of sensory perception and movement, from the lights of the heavenly angels by the command of God Most High. Should the balance of the humors deteriorate, by an excess of heat, cold, or for some other reason, it will not be fit to receive those impressions: like a mirror, the surface will reflect images so long as its surface is suitable. If it becomes scratched or tarnished, it will not reflect; not because the images have been obliterated or are absent, but because its fitness to reflect them has been nullified.

In this way, the suitability of this fine and even vapor which we have designated the animal spirit is tied to the balance of the humors. If that is nullified, it will not admit of balancing. When it does not accept the powers of perceptions and motion, the limbs are deprived of its effect and fall insensate and motionless. It is said: "It died."

This is the meaning of the death of the animal spirit. The arranger of these causes—to disturb the balance of the humors—is a created being, one of those beings created by God Most High. He is called the Angel of Death. People know his name, but coming to know his true nature is lengthy.

This is the meaning of the death of animals, but the death of a human being is of a different kind, for he has the spirit which the animals

have and another spirit, which we have designated the "human spirit," or "soul" (*dil*) in some of the previous chapters. It is not of the same kind as the other spirit, which is physical, like attenuated air or like a refined, ripened, purified mist.

But this human spirit has no body, for it does not admit of division. The knowledge of God Most High alights in it. As God Most High is Indivisible and One, the place of the spiritual knowledge of the One's is also one and indivisible. It does not alight in any place capable of division; rather it alights in something incomparably one and indivisible.

So, consider the wick and the flame of the lamp and the light of the lamp, all three. The wick is like the heart (*dil*), the flame of the lamp is like the animal spirit, and the light of the lamp is like the human spirit. Just as the light of the lamp is insubstantial and finer than the lamp, and, thou wouldst say, cannot (itself) be observed,<sup>232</sup> the human spirit is also insubstantial—an addition to the animal spirit, and is, thou wouldst say, not observable.

This is an apt comparison when thou takest into consideration its insubstantiality. But from another point of view, it is not apt, for the light of the lamp is dependent upon the lamp and is an offshoot of it. When the lamp is rendered useless, the light perishes. However, the human spirit is not dependent upon the animal spirit; rather, it is the foundation of the animal spirit. When the animal spirit perishes, (the human spirit) does not perish. If thou desirest its similitude, imagine a light that is more delicate than that lamp and (imagine) that the existence of the lamp is dependent upon (the light), not the light upon the lamp. Then the comparison will be apt.

Therefore, in one way the animal spirit is like a vehicle for the human spirit; and in another, a tool. When the constitution of this animal spirit is destroyed, the form perishes, but the human spirit remains in place, however without a tool and a vehicle. The death of the vehicle or the spoiling of the tool does not mean the harm and annihilation of the rider; but he is (left) without implements.

The implement given to him was given so that he might hunt spiritual knowledge and the love of God Most High. If he has taken the prey, the loss of his implements is a blessing, removing a burden from him. This is what the Prophet (S) said: "Death is a gift and a present for the believer." It is as though a person has a net for trapping and always lugs it about. When he has captured his prey, the loss of the net is a windfall for him. If, *God forbid*, this tool is made useless before capturing the prey, his regret and trouble will have no end. This pain and

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<sup>232</sup> That is cannot be perceived of itself, but only by its effect, such as visibility of an object resulting from the effect of light.

regret is the beginning of the torment of the grave, *may God save us from that!*

### 3. THY THOU-NESS IS NOT IN THY BODY<sup>233</sup>

Now, know that if a person's arms and legs are paralyzed, he may survive,<sup>234</sup> for his true nature is not in them. Arms and legs are his tools and he employs them. Just as the true nature of thy "thou-ness" is not in thy arms and legs, so it is not in thy back, stomach, or head; nor anywhere (else) in thy physical body. If all should become paralyzed, it is possible that a person will survive. The meaning of death is that all parts of the body become paralyzed,<sup>235</sup> but the meaning of paralysis of the hand is that it does not act at thy command. Why? Because the obedience (to thee) that it possessed was by way of an attribute called "power." That attribute is a light which comes to it from the lamp of the animal spirit. Should the arteries, which are the pathways of that spirit, become blocked, the power departs (from the hand) and obedience became impossible. In the same manner, the obedience that all parts of the body have to thee is by virtue of the animal spirit. So, when its temperament is destroyed and obedience ceases, it is called "death." But thou survivest, even though thy being obeyed (by the body and its parts) does not survive.

How can the true nature of thy thou-ness be in this body? If thou think about it, thou wilt realize that these parts of thee are not the same parts as those thou didst possess when a child. They have all dissolved and been replaced by others with the food (thou hast consumed). The body is not the same (that thou hadst then), but thou art the same thou! Therefore, thy thou-ness does not lie in thy body. If thy body is destroyed, so be it! Thou continuest to live in thine essential self.

However, thy attributes are of two kinds: one kind is shared with thy body, such as hunger, thirst, and sleep. They cannot be satisfied without stomach and body. They are canceled at the time of death. The other is that in which the body has no part, such as the knowledge of God Most High and beauty of the Divine Presence, and the joy that comes with that. This attribute is of thine essence and endures with thee. This is the meaning of: *Enduring good deeds.* (Q. 18:46: 19:76) Anything other than this is (thy) ignorance of God Most High, which (ignorance) is also an attribute of thine essence. This is a blindness of the soul (*rūh*) and the seed of *whoso will be blind here will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the Path.* (Q. 17:72)

<sup>233</sup> "Thy thou-ness" (*tūyī-yi tū*) or, more literally: *The thou-ness of thee:* in modern idiom. "Your You-ness"; i.e., your essential individuality.

<sup>234</sup> "survives" (*bar jāyi khwish bāshad*): literally, "he is/may be in his place."

<sup>235</sup> i.e.. cease to function.

Thou wilt in no manner know the true nature of death until thou come to recognize these two spirits, the difference between them, and their relationship to each other.

#### 4. PRESERVING THE BALANCE OF THE SPIRIT

Know, now, that this animal spirit is of this lower world and is a compound of the tenuousness of the vapor of the humors. There are four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. These four originate in water, fire, earth, and air.<sup>236</sup> The discord and equilibrium of temperament comes from the differences in degrees of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The object of the craft of medicine is to maintain the equilibrium of these four humors in the (animal) spirit to the end that it be fit to function as the vehicle and tool of the other spirit, that which we have called the “human spirit.” That (spirit) is not of this world; rather, it is of the higher world and is of the essence of the angels. Its descent into this world is foreign to the nature of its essence; however, its exile (to this world) is to enable it to gather its provisions from guidance, as God Most High said: *We said: Go down, all of you, from hence; but verily there comes unto you from Me a guidance; and whoso follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they grieve.* (Q. 2:38) And this which God Most High said: *I am about to create a mortal out of the clay, and when I have fashioned him, and breathed into him of My spirit...* (Q. 38:71-72) is a reference to the difference between the two spirits. He delivered one with the clay and He explained the equilibrium of this temperament when He said: “*I have fashioned him,*” (meaning) “*I have made and equipped him*”—and this is the equilibrium. Then He said: “*I have breathed into him of My spirit,*” He added this to him. The similitude of this is that of a person preparing a canvas rag so that it will catch fire.<sup>237</sup> Then he takes it near the fire and blows on it until it catches fire.

Just as that lower animal spirit retains its equilibrium, and a physician comes to know the causes of that equilibrium in order to repel illness and to keep it from destruction, so there is an equilibrium for the higher human spirit—that which is the true nature of the soul which ethics and spiritual self-discipline—which are known from the Religious Law—preserve. That is the cause of its health, as will be discussed below in *The Pillars of Being a Muslim*.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> The four elements.

<sup>237</sup> A person prepares a piece of coarse canvas which does not readily burn by shredding, etc., so that it will accept the fire (it will burn) when he brings it to the fire and blows on it.

<sup>238</sup> *The Pillars of Being a Muslim*: the main body of this work, immediately following the *Prolegomena*.

Thus, it has been made known that so long as a person does not know the true nature of a person's spirits, it is impossible that he come to know the Hereafter through insight; just as one cannot know God, may He be glorified and exalted, until he knows himself. Therefore, self-knowledge is the key to the knowledge of God and the key to knowledge of the Hereafter. The root of religion is *belief in God and the Last Day*. It is for this reason that we have presented this spiritual knowledge.

However, we have not disclosed one secret of the secrets of His basic qualities, for it is not permitted to utter that. Minds could not endure it. All of the spiritual knowledge of God, *may He be glorified and exalted*, and of the spiritual knowledge of the Hereafter is based upon it. Try to learn it from thyself by way of earnest striving and seeking; for, if thou didst hear it from someone else, thou wouldst not have the strength to listen to it. Many have heard this attribute of God Most High and have not believed, did not have the strength to hear it, or denied it, saying: "This itself is not possible! It is not absolute transcendence,"<sup>239</sup> rather, it is the denial of attributes!" So, how wouldst thou have the strength to hear it with respect to a human being?

Indeed, this attribute with respect to God Most High is not itself found explicitly in the Quran, nor in the Traditions; also because if people should hear it, they would deny it. The prophets were advised: "*Have discourse with the people according to the (levels of) their intellects.*" "*Speak to the people what they are able to bear.*"<sup>240</sup> It was revealed to some of the prophets: "Do not say to the people that which they do not understand, for then they will deny it and that will cause them harm."

## 5. THE MEANING OF THE GATHERING, RESURRECTION, SENDING, AND RETURN

From all of this you have learned that the true nature of the human soul (*jān*) is established in its own insubstantial essence, and within the establishment of its own essence and special attributes, it has no need of physical form. Death does not mean the annihilation of that; rather, it means the end of its dominion over the physical body. The meaning of the Gathering, the Resurrection, the Sending, and the Return<sup>241</sup> is not that the soul is brought into existence again after annihilation. Rather, it means that it is given a form, that is, a form which

<sup>239</sup> "absolute transcendence" (*tanzīh*): total purity and freedom from all anthropomorphic attributes and elements in the concept of deity.

<sup>240</sup> Ghazzali gives a slightly different implication to his Persian translation of the Arabic sentence.

<sup>241</sup> These terms—gathering, resurrection, sending, and return—all refer to the same thing, the resurrection on the Day of Judgment.

is prepared to receive its occupation again, just as was done in the beginning. This time it is easier, because at the first time, both the soul and the body had to be created. This time the spirit (*rūh*) endures—that is, the human spirit—and parts of the body also endure. Their collection is easier than their invention, from our point of view and from the point of view of truth. Human qualities have no access to the Divine Intelligence, for where there is no difficulty; there is also no ease.

The prerequisite of the Return is not that (the soul) be given to the body which it (formerly) occupied, which was in the form of a vehicle. If the horse is changed, the rider is still the same. It has been subject to change from infancy to old age, its parts for other parts of nourishment, while he remains the same.

Therefore, the people who have stipulated this<sup>242</sup> until problems have arisen for them to which they have given weak answers have been delivered from that difficulty, as when they have been asked: "Some people eat people; the limbs of one become the limbs of the other. To which one will the parts be given? Or, if a limb (or an organ) is lost to a person and after that he performs acts of service thereby acquiring religious merit, is the severed limb returned to him (in the afterlife) or not? If it is not, how can he remain sightless, handless, or footless in heaven? How can those organs which did not participate in his deeds in this world be rewarded?"

They say idle things like this and demand answers. There is no need of such things when thou hast learned the true nature of the Return, which is that there is no need for the same (earthly) body. This difficulty arises because they supposed that thy thou-ness and thy true nature are thy body. As that very same body does not survive, thou are not that (body)! They fall into difficulty because the premise is wrong.

## 6. WITNESSING HEAVEN AND HELL IN THIS WORLD

Certainly thou mayest say that amongst the religious scholars and theologians there is the famous doctrine that the vital principle (*jān*) is obliterated at death, then comes into existence again for him, and this contradicts that (which thou hast said).

Know that anyone who follows the words of others is blind. This person says that he is neither of the imitators (of authority),<sup>243</sup> nor of the

<sup>242</sup> That the same physical body we inhabit upon earth accompanies us to the Hereafter.

<sup>243</sup> "imitators (of authority)" (*ahl-i taqlid*): It should be pointed out that in modern English the words "imitate," "imitation," and "imitator" commonly carry the generally negative connotation of someone or something "spurious, counterfeit, not original, lacking in originality, inferior to the model." Today the words are used more commonly in this sense. However, the real meaning of the verb is to follow something as a pattern or example. Iranian Shi'ites, for example, customarily select some pious and learned (in

discerning, for if he were of the discerning, he would know that the death of the body does eliminate a person's true nature; and if he were of the imitators, he know from the Quran and the Traditions that the human spirit survives after death, and that after death, the spirits are in two categories: the wretched and the happy.

As for the happy spirits, the Glorious Quran says: *And think not of those who are killed in the way of God as dead. Nay, they are alive being provided sustenance from their Lord, rejoicing in what God has given them out of His grace.* (Q. 3:169-70)<sup>244</sup>

And as for the wretched spirits, when the Prophet (S) and the Companions killed the unbelievers at (the battle of) Badr,<sup>245</sup> he addressed them and called to them one by one—and they were slain—saying: “O So-and-so! and O So-and-so! The promises that I had received from God concerning the victory over His enemies were all true and God Most High has fulfilled them. Were the promises that He gave you about the punishment after death kept or not?” The crowd who were accompanying the Prophet said: “O Prophet of God, they are a heap of corpses. Why art thou speaking to them?” He answered: “By that God who commands the spirit of Muhammad, they are hearing these words better than ye are, but they are incapable of replying.”

Anyone who searches through the Traditions that are about the dead and their awareness of their mourners and visitors (at their graves), and that which takes place in this world, knows with certainty that their annihilation is not mentioned in divine law; rather, it is reported that their mode and place have been transformed. The grave is either a cave of the caves of hell, or a garden of the gardens of Paradise.

So, recognize truly that death never nullifies anything of thine essential nature, nor of thy characteristic attributes. However, thy sensory organs, movements, and fancies—those which are tied to the brain and organs—cease, but thou endurest, alone and absolute, just as thou didst left this place. With the death of the horse, the rider does not become a learned jurisprudent if he was a weaver; if he was blind, he does not become sighted, or if he was sighted, he does not become blind: instead,

religious law and ethics) individual—given various titles including *mujtahid* and *āyatullāh*—to follow and consult in matters of religious law and ethics. They say that they are “imitating” or “following” (*taqlid kardan*) him; that is, following his example and instruction. It should not be forgotten that one of the most famous works of Medieval Christianity, by Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471CE) was named *The Imitation of Christ*. In this sense, “imitation” is neutral and can be either good or bad depending on the moral qualities of both the imitator and the imitatee.

<sup>244</sup> After quoting these verses in Arabic, Ghazzali follows with a Persian translation, omitted here.

<sup>245</sup> The battle of Badr, between the party of the Prophet (about 70 strong) and nearly a thousand of the Quraysh of Makkah, occurred in Ramadan AH2/624CE. It was the first major military victory of the nascent Islamic state.

he becomes a pedestrian! The body is a vehicle, like the horse. The rider is thou!

It is for this reason that for persons who become absent from their sensory perceptions, and delve into their selves, becoming engaged and immersed in the remembrance of God Most High. As it is the beginning of the way of Sufism, there are the states of the Hereafter by way of the blissful experience of witnessing. Their animal spirit, even though it has not lost the equilibrium of its temperament, yet appears to be afflicted or exhausted so that it does not distract them from the true nature of their essence. Then their state approaches that of the state of the dead. Therefore, that which for others is disclosed at death is disclosed to them here. When they come to themselves and return to the world of perceptions, mostly it happens that there is no memory of it. However, there is an effect that stays with one. If the true nature of heaven has been shown to one, its spirit, ease, joy, and delight remain with one.

But if they have shown him hell, then its fatigue and lassitude are with him. If he retains something of that (experience) in his memory, he relates it. If the storehouse of the thought has made a copy of that thing—a similitude that would better remain in his memory—then he relates that, as when the Prophet (S), while performing a obligatory prayer, raised his hand and announced: “A bunch of grapes from heaven has been shown to me. I wished that I could have brought them to this world.” Do not suppose that in reality that a bunch of simulated grapes can be brought into this world. That is impossible; if it were not, (the Prophet) would have brought them. Yet, it was disclosed to him by way of witnessing. The true nature of its transformation is a lengthy study; there is no need for thee to pursue it.

The difference in the stations of the religious scholars is that one is all taken up to know what the bunch of heavenly grapes was, why he saw it, and the others did not! Another got no more than this, that (the Prophet) had moved his hand; therefore *a minor action does not nullify formal prayer* and he gives long opinions about the details of this.<sup>246</sup> He thinks the beginning and end of knowledge itself is in these things, and that anyone who has learned this and is not content with that and busies himself with some other (aspect) is himself idle and is turning away from the study of Religious Law!

The point is that thou not thinkest that the Prophet (S) related a story that he had heard from Gabriel, as thou dost comprehend the meaning of “hearing” from Gabriel (thou hast learned that meaning itself like other things, too), but that the Prophet (S) saw heaven! Yet, in reality, heaven cannot be seen in this world. Instead, he went to that

<sup>246</sup> This scholar takes the position that, because the Prophet moved his hands during the formal prayer, the significance of that act is that such extraneous motions do not invalidate the prayer. He completely ignores the celestial grapes and their import.

world and was absent from this world. This was one kind of his ascensions. However, being absent is of two kinds: one is with the death of the animal spirit, the other with exhaustion of the animal spirit.

However, heaven cannot be seen in this world, just as the seven heavens and the seven climes cannot be contained in a pistachio shell. One particle of heaven could not be contained in this world. Rather, as the sense of hearing is excluded from displaying the image of the heavens and earth in it as the eyes do, all of the senses of this world are excluded from all the pleasures of heaven. The senses of that world are themselves something else.

## **7. THE MEANING OF THE TORMENT OF THE GRAVE**

Now the time has come for thee to learn the meaning of the torment of the grave and to know that the torment of the grave is of two kinds: spiritual and physical.

As for the physical, everyone knows this himself; but not the spiritual, except for him who has come to know himself and the true nature (of his own spirit (*rūh*)). It is established by its own essence, and does not require a body for its support. It endures after death, for death does not obliterate it. However, death takes back his eyes, ears, and all of his sensory organs, from him. When the senses are gone; wife, offspring, wealth, property, domicile, slaves, livestock, relatives, connections, and, indeed, the earth and all that is in it perceptible to the senses are taken from him. If he loved all of these things and he had surrendered his entire self to them, he would necessarily remain in the torment of his separation from them. If he was free of everything and had no beloved here (on earth), but instead was yearning for death, he will be at peace. If he had attained the love of God Most High, had become fond of remembering Him, had given all of himself to Him, and had held the chattels of this world to be irksome and a distraction, then when he dies he will reach his Beloved. Trouble and confusion will depart and he will achieve (spiritual) happiness.

Now, reflect! Is it possible for a person to know himself and recognize that he will survive (after death), and to know that all of his desideratum and cherished things are in this world, and then to wonder whether, after leaving this world, he would be in misery and torment because of his separation from his own cherished possessions? As the Prophet (S) said: *Cherish (well) what thou cherishest, for thou shalt surely be separated from it.* Or, if he knows that his beloved is all God, *may He be praised and exalted*, and holds the world and all that it contains in contempt, except that much which is his provision, can there remain a doubt that when he leaves this world he will not be liberated from sorrow and achieve ease?

Therefore, whoever knows this will have no doubt but that the torment of the grave exists, but not for the pious. Rather, it is for the worldly and those who have dedicated their entire being to the world. Through this, the significance of this Tradition is made clear: *The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever.*

## 8. THE TRUE NATURE AND DEGREES OF THE TORMENT OF THE GRAVE

In so far as thou hast come to know the root of the torment of the grave, the cause of which is the love of this world, know that this torment is of different kinds. For some it is more and for others less, in accordance with (their surrender to) the carnal appetites of the world. As a result, the torment for the person who has not bound his soul (*dil*) to more than one thing in all the world is not so great as the torment of that person who has lands, chattels, servants, livestock, apparel, retinue, and all the comforts of the world, and binds his soul to all of them. Indeed, in this world, if someone brings a person the news that one of his horses has been stolen, his torment is less than if he is told that ten of his horses have been stolen. If thou takest all of his property, his sorrow would be greater than if it had been half, and less than it would have been if not only all of his property, but also his wife and children and all that he had in this world—everything—had been carried off as loot and taken out of the land leaving him alone. And this is the meaning of death!

Consequently, the punishment and ease of a person is according to the slackness or tightness of his ties to the world. The torment will be very harsh for him who is favored in every way with the things of the world and who dedicates his entire being to them, as God Most High said: *That is because they love this world's life more than the Hereafter.* (Q. 16:107) Alluding to such as he, the Prophet (S) said: "Do ye know what was the import of the sending down of this verse: *Verily for him there is a straitened life and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection?*" (Q. 20:124) They said: "God and the Prophet know better." He said: "The torment of the unbeliever in the grave is that he will be put in the power by ninety-nine dragons."<sup>247</sup> Dost thou know what these dragons are? Ninety-nine snakes, each snake having nine heads.

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<sup>247</sup> "dragons": The belief in dragons was widespread in the Ancient and Medieval worlds and survives to this day in some corners of the world. The multi-headed dragon of this Tradition is reminiscent of the Hydra, the many-headed serpent or monster of Classical mythology that was slain by Hercules as the second of the Twelve Labors. In this passage Ghazzali seems to be equating "dragon" (*azhdahā*) with "snake" (*mār*). Some sort of reptile is indicated. Incidentally, the English word "dragon" is derived from the Greek *drakon*, meaning "serpent." There is an extensive literature on dragons, which the interested reader may wish to consult. The Arabic for "dragon," *tinnīn*, primarily presents the image of a sea monster.

They bite and lick him and breathe into him until that day when he will be summoned forth."

The insightful have seen these dragons with the eye of insight, but the unseeing fools say: "We looked into the grave and didn't see anything. If there were something—and our eyes are good—we would have seen something."

This fool should know that these dragons are of the essence of the spirit (*rūh*) of the dead person and are not external to the inside of his life-spirit (*jān*) so that another could see them! Indeed, this dragon was inside him before death, but he ignored it and did not know it. He should know that this dragon is made up of the attributes of his self (*nafs*), and the number of its heads which branch out from it is according to the number of the branches of his blameworthy traits of character. The root of the nature of this dragon is the love of the world; then the heads which branch out from it are in the number of bad traits of character which branch out from it, such as hatred, envy, hypocrisy, arrogance, greed, deceit, fraud, enmity, the love of rank, pomp, and wealth, etc. The root of this dragon and the multitude of its heads may be recognized with the light of insight; however, their number can be seen by the light of prophethood in accordance with the number of the bad qualities that (the light) encompasses, but we have no knowledge of the number of traits.

Thus, this dragon is resident and hidden inside the vital principle (*jān*) of the unbeliever, not only because he is ignorant of God and the Prophet, but also because he has dedicated himself to the world. As God Most High said: *That is because they love this world's life more than the Hereafter.* (Q. 16:107) He also said: *Ye squandered your good things in your life of the world and sought comfort in them.* (Q. 46:20) If it were that the dragon was external to him, as some people suppose, it would have been easier; for it is possible that (the dragon) might refrain from (tormenting him) for an hour. However, it is established within his spirit (*jān*), that it itself is his very attributes, how can he flee from it?

Just as a person who sells a bondmaid then finds that he is in love with her, that dragon within his soul (*jān*) continually stings him. It is his love that was hidden in his soul, but he was unaware of it until now, when it inflicts a wound on him. Just like this one, there were ninety-nine dragons inside him before death, but he was unaware of them until now when the wound has appeared. Just as the love itself was the cause of his ease as long as he was with his beloved; that same (love) became the cause of his sorrow at the time of separation. For, if there had been no love, at the time of separation there would have been no sorrow, as the love of the world and his passionate love that is the cause of ease become the causes of his torment. The love of rank stings his soul like a dragon, the passionate love for wealth (bites) like a snake, the passionate love for rank (stings) like a scorpion, and know that the rest are analogous to these.

As the lover of the bondmaid, in separation, desires to throw himself into water or fire, or that a scorpion sting him so that he is relieved of the pain (of separation), so (the lover of the world) will desire that the pain of the scorpion and snake were in lieu of that which torments him in the grave. For in this world, people know that the former wounds the body and does so from the outside, while the latter wounds inside the soul (*jān*) and does so from within; but no external eye sees it.

So, in reality, each person carries the cause of his own torment with him from here, and that is inside him. It was for this that the Prophet (S) said: *Rather these are your deeds being returned to you.* He said: "All of this punishment is nothing more than your own (deeds) placed before you."<sup>248</sup> And it is for this that God Most High said: "If ye had sure knowledge, ye yourselves would see hell." *Nay, would that ye knew with a sure knowledge! For ye will behold hell-fire. Aye, ye will behold it with sure vision!* (Q. 102:5-7) And for this He said: *Lo! Hell is all around the disbelievers.* (Q. 9:49) Hell surrounds them and is together with them: He did not say "will be surrounding."

## 9. THOSE THINGS OF THE NEXT WORLD WHICH CANNOT BE SEEN BY THE EYE OF THIS WORLD

Surely, thou mayest say: "It is apparent from the external sense of the Religious Law that this dragon is seen with eye of the head, but that dragon which is inside the soul is not visible (to the physical eye)."

Know that this dragon is visible, but only to the dead. The people of this world do not see it, for nothing from the other world can be seen by eye of this world. This dragon is a verisimilitude for the dead person, so that he sees it in the way that a dragon is seen in this world—but thou dost not see it. Just as a sleeping person often sees a snake biting him, but the person sitting beside him does not see it. That snake has reality for the sleeper and he is pained by it, but it is non-existent for the conscious person. The torment of the sleeper is not diminished because the wakeful person does not see the snake.

When a sleeper sees a snake bite him in a dream, it is the injury of an enemy who will obtained victory over him and that pain is spiritual and is on the soul, but its similitude—when desired (to be) borrowed from this world—is a snake. It may be that when an enemy triumphs over him, he may say: "I have seen the explanation of (my) dream." And he may say: "Would that the snake had bitten me and that enemy had not done his will with me," because that torment in his soul would be greater than the pain of the snake (bite) which would be for the body.

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<sup>248</sup> This is Ghazzali's explanatory translation of the preceding Arabic.

They bite and lick him and breathe into him until that day when he will be summoned forth."

The insightful have seen these dragons with the eye of insight, but the unseeing fools say: "We looked into the grave and didn't see anything. If there were something—and our eyes are good—we would have seen something."

This fool should know that these dragons are of the essence of the spirit (*rūh*) of the dead person and are not external to the inside of his life-spirit (*jān*) so that another could see them! Indeed, this dragon was inside him before death, but he ignored it and did not know it. He should know that this dragon is made up of the attributes of his self (*nafs*), and the number of its heads which branch out from it is according to the number of the branches of his blameworthy traits of character. The root of the nature of this dragon is the love of the world; then the heads which branch out from it are in the number of bad traits of character which branch out from it, such as hatred, envy, hypocrisy, arrogance, greed, deceit, fraud, enmity, the love of rank, pomp, and wealth, etc. The root of this dragon and the multitude of its heads may be recognized with the light of insight; however, their number can be seen by the light of prophethood in accordance with the number of the bad qualities that (the light) encompasses, but we have no knowledge of the number of traits.

Thus, this dragon is resident and hidden inside the vital principle (*jān*) of the unbeliever, not only because he is ignorant of God and the Prophet, but also because he has dedicated himself to the world. As God Most High said: *That is because they love this world's life more than the Hereafter.* (Q. 16:107) He also said: *Ye squandered your good things in your life of the world and sought comfort in them.* (Q. 46:20) If it were that the dragon was external to him, as some people suppose, it would have been easier; for it is possible that (the dragon) might refrain from (tormenting him) for an hour. However, it is established within his spirit (*jān*), that it itself is his very attributes, how can he flee from it?

Just as a person who sells a bondmaid then finds that he is in love with her, that dragon within his soul (*jān*) continually stings him. It is his love that was hidden in his soul, but he was unaware of it until now, when it inflicts a wound on him. Just like this one, there were ninety-nine dragons inside him before death, but he was unaware of them until now when the wound has appeared. Just as the love itself was the cause of his ease as long as he was with his beloved; that same (love) became the cause of his sorrow at the time of separation. For, if there had been no love, at the time of separation there would have been no sorrow, as the love of the world and his passionate love that is the cause of ease become the causes of his torment. The love of rank stings his soul like a dragon, the passionate love for wealth (bites) like a snake, the passionate love for rank (stings) like a scorpion, and know that the rest are analogous to these.

As the lover of the bondmaid, in separation, desires to throw himself into water or fire, or that a scorpion sting him so that he is relieved of the pain (of separation), so (the lover of the world) will desire that the pain of the scorpion and snake were in lieu of that which torments him in the grave. For in this world, people know that the former wounds the body and does so from the outside, while the latter wounds inside the soul (*jān*) and does so from within; but no external eye sees it.

So, in reality, each person carries the cause of his own torment with him from here, and that is inside him. It was for this that the Prophet (S) said: *Rather these are your deeds being returned to you.* He said: “All of this punishment is nothing more than your own (deeds) placed before you.”<sup>248</sup> And it is for this that God Most High said: “If ye had sure knowledge, ye yourselves would see hell.” *Nay, would that ye knew with a sure knowledge! For ye will behold hell-fire. Aye, ye will behold it with sure vision!* (Q. 102:5-7) And for this He said: *Lo! Hell is all around the disbelievers.* (Q. 9:49) Hell surrounds them and is together with them: He did not say “will be surrounding.”

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<sup>248</sup> This is Ghazzali's explanatory translation of the preceding Arabic.

So, if thou shouldst say that the snake is non-existent and that which bites the sleeper is but a phantom of the imagination, know that this is a great error. On the contrary, the snake does exist, for it has achieved the meaning of existence and not achieved the meaning of non-existence. Whatever thou perceivest and seest in sleep has existence for thee, even though no one else can see it. And, whatever thou dost not see is unperceived and non-existent for thee, even though all creation sees it! Since the torment and the cause of the torment have been perceived by both the dead person and the sleeper, what does it matter if others do not see it?

Yet, there is this, that the sleeper will soon awake and be liberated from (his torment). Therefore, this (torment) is called "imaginary." However, the dead person remains enveloped in (torment), for death has no end. (The torment) remains with him permanently, as firmly as the sensory perceptions of this world.

It is not found in the Religious Law that those snakes, scorpions, and dragons that are in the grave should be visible to the physical eyes of the common folk as long as they are in the visible world. However, if a person distances himself from this world by sleeping, and the state of this dead person is revealed to him, he sees him among the snakes and scorpions. The prophets and saints also see this while awake, for what others experience in sleep, they experience while awake. The world of perception does not veil their witnessing the affairs of the other world.

So this prolixity leads to this: that some fools look into a grave and do not see anything with their external eyes, so they deny the torment of the grave. This is because they do not know the way to the affairs of that (other) world.

## **10. FOR WHOM IS THE TORMENT OF THE GRAVE AND FOR WHOM IS IT NOT?**

Surely thou wilt say: "If the torment of the grave is because of the connection of the soul to this world, no one is free from that who loves his wife, children, property, and rank. Consequently, everyone will be subjected to the torment of the grave and no one will escape it."

The answer to this is: "That is not the way of it, for there are people who are fed up with the world and for them no pleasure of enjoyment or tranquillity in it remains. They wish for death, and there are many Muslims like that who are poor."<sup>249</sup> However, those who are rich and powerful are of two kinds: there is a group who, though they love the things of this world, also love God Most High. So, if the case be that they

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<sup>249</sup> "poor" (*darwîsh*): Ghazzali is using the word to mean "poor in worldly possessions." *Darwîsh* is also used for those who have chosen poverty for the sake of God, such as many of the Sufis. The word "dervish" derives from this Persian word.

love God Most High more (than the world), then there is no torment for them. Their parable is that of a person who has a mansion and a city that he loves, but he loves governing, rule, palace, and garden even more. If a command comes to him from the king appointing him as the governor of another city, he will not regret leaving his own homeland at all, for his love for his mansion, home, and city will appear as nothing to him and disappear so that no sign of it remains because of his love for governing, which overwhelms it.

Therefore, the prophets, saints, and devout Muslims—even though they favor their wives, children, city, and country—when the love of God Most High appears and the pleasure of intimacy with Him appears, everything else becomes unimportant. This pleasure appears with death, so they are safe from (the torment of the grave). But, there are those who love the carnal appetites of the world more (than God) and they shall not escape this torment; a majority is of this (group).

It is for this that God Most High said: *There is not one of you but shall approach it. That is the fixed ordinance of thy Lord. Then We shall rescue those who kept from evil, and leave the evildoers crouching there.* (Q. 19:71-2) These people will suffer torment for a time. Then, as their commitment to the world grows distant, they forget the world and the pleasures of the world and see again the verity of the love of God Most High that has been in their souls. They are like the person who prefers one mansion to another, or one city to another, or one wife to another, but likes the others too. Separation will be painful for a while; then he forgets and becomes accustomed to the other. But his first affection is in his soul and returns even after a long time. However, the person who has absolutely no love for God Most High stays in that torment, for his love is for that which is taken back from him. By what consolation will he achieve liberation from that? This is one of the reasons that the torment of the unbeliever is eternal.

Know that every one claims that he loves God Most High, or loves Him more than he loves the world; this is the practice of the whole world—in words. But there are criteria and standards by which to recognize him (who speaks the truth). This is when his self and his appetite command him to do something, and the Law of God Most High commands something contrary to that. If one sees that his soul is more inclined to the command of God Most High, then he loves Him more; just as a person loves two friends, but loves one more than the other. If a dispute arises between his friends, he will take the side of the one whom he loves more and in this manner reveals which one he prefers. There are no ifs or buts. Uttering it with the tongue has no profit if the utterance is a lie.

It was with respect to this that the Prophet (S) said: “By always repeating *There is no god but God* they are protected from the punishment of God, *may He be honored and glorified*, until they choose

the bargain of the world over the bargain of religion. When they do that, God Most High calls them liars because their uttering of *There is no god but God* was a lie."

So, from this thou hast learned that with internal witnessing the spiritually insightful see who will be delivered from the torment of the grave. They know that most people will be delivered, but they will be for a time in differing straits, according to the many different degrees of their ties to the world.

## 11. THE WAY TO TEST SAFETY FROM THE TORMENT OF THE GRAVE

Again, there is a group of fools and presumptuous persons who say: "If this be the torment of the grave, we will be free of it, for we have no connections with the world; its existence or non-existence is nothing to us!" This claim is absurd; for until one tests it, one would not know. If it were thus, it would not have any effect upon his soul should whatever he possesses be stolen by a thief, every concession he has go to another—from among his companions—and all of his students turn away from him and slander him. It would be the same (to him) as though someone else's property was carried away or someone else's concession nullified. Then this claim would be just. It would be proper for him to say: "I have this character." But he is deluded so long as he is not robbed or they have not turned away from him. Therefore, he must separate himself from his wealth and pass up his rents and test himself; then he will have confidence. Many people have thought that they had no attachment to their wives and bondmaids, but when they divorce or sell them, the fire of love that was concealed in their souls reappears and they become mad and miserable.

Consequently, anyone who desires to be delivered from the torment of the grave must not be attached to anything of this world, except by necessity. Just as every person has a need for a place of purification,<sup>250</sup> he likes that out of necessity, yet wishes to be rid of it. His eagerness to put food in his stomach must be the same as in eliminating food from it; both are necessary. All other acts are like this.

Therefore, if the soul cannot be devoid of these attachments, one must make a fondness for the remembrance of God Most High dominant in one's soul by being attentive to worship and the remembrance of God Most High, so that this love masters the love of the world. One seeks proofs and evidence of this from oneself by following of the Religious Law and giving precedence to the command of God Most High over one's own passion. If the self (*nafs*) obeys one (in these observances), one may be confident that he has escaped the torment of the grave. If this

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<sup>250</sup> A euphemism for a toilet (*tahārat-jāy*).

not be the case, he will lay his body upon the torment of the grave, unless God Most High's forgiveness touches him and helps him.

## 12. THE THREE KINDS OF SPIRITUAL HELLFIRE

Now it is the time for us to explain the meaning of "spiritual hell." By "spiritual," we mean that which pertains to the spirit (*rūh*) exclusively: the body is excluded. This is *the fire of God, kindled, which leaps over the hearts (of men)*. (Q. 104:6-7) It is the fire that overwhelms the soul, while that fire that attacks the body is called "physical."

So, know that there are three kinds of fire in the spiritual hell: one is the fire of separation from the carnal appetites of the world; the second is the fire of shame, confusion, embarrassment, and disgrace; and the third is the fire of being deprived of the beauty of the Divine Presence and the loss of hope for that. All three of these fires affect the spirit (*jān*) and the soul (*dil*), not the body. It is necessary to explain the causes of these three fires that they have carried with themselves from this place,<sup>251</sup> and to make this meaning plain by borrowing comparisons from this world.

**THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST FIRE:** This is being cut off from the carnal appetites of the world. The cause of this has been discussed (above) in *The Torment of the Grave*: The love of the necessary is the heaven of the soul and the hell of the soul. It is heaven as long as one is with the beloved and hell in the absence of the beloved. So the lover of the world is in heaven in this world: *the world is the heaven of the unbelievers*. But in the Hereafter, he is in hell, because his beloved (the world) has been taken away from him. Consequently, one thing is both the cause of pleasure and also sorrow, but in two different circumstances.

The similitude of this fire in the world is a king who rules and is obeyed throughout the world and continually indulges himself in the enjoyment of beauties of girls and boys and wives, or in the admiration of beautiful gardens and palaces. Then, suddenly an enemy appears and captures him and carries him off in bondage. In his own country, he is made a keeper of dogs! His family, concubines, and male slaves are used before his very eyes! Everything in the treasury that was precious to him is given to his enemies. Think what sorrow this man will experience! The fire of separation from his power, women, children, bondmaids, blessings, and treasury will ignite in his soul and burn continuously. He would rather that they had killed him in some manner so that he could escape so much torment! This is the similitude of one fire. However

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<sup>251</sup> I.e., the world.

much his ease was greater, his power more absolute and felicitous, the hotter the fire will burn.

Therefore, the love of him whose enjoyment in this world was greater and whom the world favored more will be more intractable and the fire of being cut off will burn more brightly in his spirit (*jān*). Yet, it is not possible to find the likeness of the fire (of spiritual hell) in this world, for the sorrow of the soul that is in this world is not completely established in the soul and spirit. The senses and obligations of this world engage the soul, and those activities are like a curtain for the heart so that torment cannot become firmly established in it. The reason for this is that when the eyes and ears are occupied with something (else), a person's sorrow is diminished; but when they cease, it increases. It is for this reason that when a sorrowing person awakens from sleep, the pain of the misfortune on the soul is greater, for the spirit had been purified during sleep. Before perceptions return (upon awakening), whatever reaches him has a greater effect so that if one hears a sweet voice upon awakening, its effect is greater. The reason for this is the purification of the soul from sensory perceptions (during sleep). It is never completely purified in this world, but at death, it becomes stripped and purified of sensory perceptions. At that time its sorrow and ease is stupendous and firmly fixed in his soul. Take care! Do not suppose that that fire will be like the fire of this world; rather, this fire (of this world) has been washed seventy times, then sent to the world.<sup>252</sup>

**THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SECOND FIRE:** That is the fire of shame and confusion from disgrace and humiliation. It will be like this: a king selects a base and tightfisted man and makes him his vizier in his kingdom. He gives him licence to enter his women's quarters without their covering themselves before him. He entrusts his treasury to him and has confidence in him in all tasks. Then, when that man attains ease, he rebels and mutinies in his heart and misappropriates from the king's treasury. He betrays the king and corrupts the king's family and women. But outwardly, he shows himself to be trustworthy to the king.

Then, one day while he is engaged in corruption in the women's quarters, he looks and sees the king looking through a small window and watching him. He knows that he has been observed every day and that the king was delaying until the vizier had made his betrayal even greater so that the king could make an example of him in some manner and kill him. In such a predicament, imagine what a fire of embarrassment from this disgrace was burning in the soul and spirit of that man! And, while

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<sup>252</sup> That is, the fire of this world has been cooled by a factor of seventy in comparison with the fire of hell.

his body was sound, in that condition, he wishes that he could sink into the earth in order to escape the fire of shame, confusion, and infamy.

So, even as thou performest tasks in this world, out of habit, which apparently seem good, yet their spirit and true nature are ugly and disgraceful. When the spirit and true nature of the thing are disclosed to thee at the Resurrection and thy disgrace revealed to all, thou wilt be burned by the fire of abashment. For example, today thou speakest ill of some one; tomorrow at the Resurrection thou wilt see that as though a person is eating the flesh of his brother and thinks he is eating roast chicken! When he looks, it is the flesh of his own brother that he is eating! See how it would be, how disgraced he will be! What fire will touch his heart! For this is the spirit and true nature of backbiting. This spirit of thine is rotten; that will be plainly evident tomorrow (at the Resurrection). It is for this that when a person dreams that he is eating carrion flesh, the interpretation is that he is backbiting.

If thou throwest a stone at a wall today and someone informs thee that the stone has fallen from the wall into the house and put out the eye of one of thy children, when thou enter the house and see that the eye of one of thy dear children has been blinded by that stone, dost thou know what fire will flame up in thy soul and how ashamed thou wilt become then? A person who in this world envies a Muslim will see himself in that shape at the Resurrection, for the true nature of his envy and his soul is that thou aim to harm him with thine enmity, but the harm is coming back to thee and destroying thy religion. Thy acts of devotion that would have been thy delight in that world are transferred to that person so that thou art stripped of (the merit of that) devotion. Devotion will be more useful to thee tomorrow than the eyes of thy children today, which are the cause of thy happiness. But children will not be the cause of thy (spiritual) happiness. Therefore, tomorrow when forms become the followers of the spirits and true natures, everything they see will be seen as befits its spiritual significance. There will be disgrace and abashment there.

For the reason that sleep is closer to the other world, acts in sleep are in a form closer to (their) spiritual significance. As when a person went to Ibn Sirin<sup>253</sup> and said: "In my sleep I saw that there was a ring in my hand and I was sealing the vulvas of women and the mouths of men." (Ibn Sirin) said: "Thou art a caller to prayer. In the month of Ramadan<sup>254</sup> dost thou give the call to prayer before the dawn?" The other replied: "That is so."

<sup>253</sup> Ibn Sirin: Muhammad bin Sirin, the son of a slave, he became a noted ascetic of Basrah. He was a scholar and the author of a popular book on the interpretation of dreams. He died in AH110/729CE.

<sup>254</sup> Ramadan: the month of fasting.

Now, look how the spirit and true nature of his actions were shown to him in sleep. The call to prayer is in the form of a sound and a reminder that during Ramadan his spirit and true nature prevent eating and sexual intercourse (during the daylight hours). It is remarkable that all of these proofs of the Resurrection are shown to thee during sleep, yet thou thyself art not aware of their significance. It is related in the Traditions that on the Day of Resurrection the world will be brought up in the form of an ugly old hag, and so forth. Whoever sees her will say: "*We seek refuge with God from thee!*" It will be said (to them): "This is that world for which you destroyed yourself in seeking it!" They will be so ashamed— whoever sees her—that they will want to be taken off to hell in order to escape that ignominy.

The parable of this disgrace is this story which they tell: "One of the kings gave a woman to his son. On that night, the king's son drank too much wine. When he was drunk, he went out to find his wife. Heading for the bridal chamber, he became lost and went out of the palace. He continued walking until he reached a place where a lamp could be seen in a house. He thought that he had found the bride's room. Upon entering, he saw some people sleeping. No matter how much he called out, no one answered him. He thought they were all asleep. He saw one person sleeping under a new wrapper. He said to himself: 'This must be my bride.'

"He lay down beside her and removed the wrapper from her. A sweet smell reached his nostrils. 'Doubtless this is my bride,' he said to himself, 'she is using such a fine scent.' He had intercourse with her until morning. He inserted his tongue into her mouth and he received some liquid from her. He thought that she was being very cordial and was pouring rose water on him.

"When day broke and he came to his senses, he looked about. It was a crypt<sup>255</sup> of the fire worshippers!<sup>256</sup> The sleepers were corpses! She who had the new wrapper, the one he thought was his bride, was an ugly old woman who had died nearby. The scent was her embalming spices, and the liquid that had flowed over was her filth! When he looked, he found himself completely covered with filth. There remained an acridity and noisomeness from her saliva in his mouth and throat. He was so mortified with shame and humiliation that he wished he could be struck dead. He feared that his father might come with his army and find him in this condition. And while he was pondering this, the king and

<sup>255</sup> "crypt" (*dukhmah*): crypt, tomb. When used in reference to the "fire worshippers" (Zoroastrians), it means an unroofed circular structure in which the dead are exposed to the elements and the predatory creatures, especially vultures.

<sup>256</sup> "fire worshippers" (*gabr*): this word usually refers to the Zoroastrians for whom fire is sacred, but is also used more broadly to mean "pagan, infidel." Ghazzali here means the Zoroastrians.

commanders of his army came in search of him. They saw him in the middle of his shameful act. He wished that the earth would open up and swallow him so that he could escape this ignominy."

So, tomorrow, the people of the world and all its pleasures and carnal appetites will all appear thus. The traces that remain of the commerce of the carnal appetite in their souls will resemble her filth and the bitterness that remained in his throat and mouth and on his body, but they will be even more shameful and horrendous.

The reality of the working of that world cannot be comprehended by parables from this world; however, this is an illustration of the description of one of the fires which burns in (one's) soul and spirit (*jān*), while his body is unaware of it. It is the fire of shame and abashment.

**THE DESCRIPTION OF THE THIRD FIRE:** (This is) the fire of regret. This is being deprived of the beauty of the Divine Presence and losing the hope of ever achieving that happiness. Its cause is the blindness and ignorance that that (soul), which has not acquired spiritual knowledge by study or earnest striving, takes with it from this world. Also, the soul has not been purified so that the beauty of the Divine Presence may be made manifest in it after death; there is no reflection in the mirror if the tarnish of sins and the appetites of the world have darkened one's soul to the extent that one remains blind.

The similitude of this fire is that thou imaginest that thou art with some people. Thou hast arrived at a place in the dark of night where there are many pebbles, but their colors cannot be seen. Thy companions say: "Take as many of these pebbles as thou canst, because we have heard that there is great profit in them."

So every one of them picks up as many as he can, but thou dost not pick up anything. Thou sayest: "It is absolute foolishness for me to trouble myself and burden myself with a heavy load for the present when I don't even know whether they will be of any use tomorrow!"

Then, the others leave that place carrying heavy loads, but thou accompany them empty-handed and laughing at them, taking them for fools. Thou ridiculest them and sayest: "Anyone who has reason and perspicacity travels in ease and calmness, just as I am doing! Anyone who is a fool makes of himself an ass to carry a burden out of greed for the absurd!"

When day dawns and the sun's light shines, they look at their burdens. All of the pebbles are jewels and red rubies! The price of each stone is a hundred thousand dinars. Then the people were full of regret, saying: "Why did we not take more?" And thou who hast cheated thyself by not taking anything, thou art mortified and the fire of regret flares in thy soul (*jān*).

So, they sell their jewels and with the money purchase power and ease in the land, eat what they desire, and live where they choose. But thou! For thee, there is hunger and nakedness. Thou art enslaved and given hard tasks to perform. No matter how much thou sayest to them: "Give me a portion of your ease,"—'*Pour on us some water or some of that wherewith God hath provided you.*' They say: 'Lo! God hath forbidden both to the disbelievers, who took their religion for a sport and pastime; (Q. 7:50-1)—they say: "Yesterday thou wert laughing at us; today we are laughing at thee." *Though ye laugh at us, yet we laugh at you even as ye are laughing.* (Q. 11:38)

This is the parable of the regret at the loss of the blessings of heaven and seeing the Divine Presence, and the treasure is the metaphor of the acts of devotion. The darkness is the metaphor of the world. But those who did not pick up the jewels of devotion and said: "Now, why should we trouble ourselves for the cash (to earn) a deferred comfort, about which there is a doubt?"—they will cry out tomorrow: '*Pour water on us...*' (Q. 7:50) Why should they not be regretful? For tomorrow, God will shower so many different kinds of happiness and comfort upon the spiritually astute and the devout that the comforts of this world could not compete with them for an instant! On the contrary, the least person who is introduced into hell is given ten times (the torment) of this world. This similitude is not of dimension and amount; rather, it is in the spirit of comfort, and that is joy and pleasure. As they say: A jewel is like ten dinars in value and spirit, not in opulence, weight, and dimension.

### **13. SPIRITUAL FIRE IS MORE TERRIBLE THAN PHYSICAL FIRE**

Thou hast become acquainted with the three kinds of spiritual fire. Now, know that this fire is more terrible than that which consumes the body, for the body is not aware of pain so long as its effect does not reach the vital spirit (*jān*). Then, the pain from the body reaches the vital spirit and becomes terrible. Consequently, the fire and pain that come out of the vital spirit, is certainly greater. This fire ignites from within the vital spirit and does not come in from outside.

The cause of all kinds of pain is that a thing required by nature is overcome by its contrary. It is required by the nature of the body that it maintain its structure and that its parts be agreeable together. Should an injury separate them, one from another, its contrary appears; it becomes painful. The wound separates one part from another, but a fire burns in all parts and separates (all the) parts from one another. Then each part receives the pain from another. For this reason, the pain of the fire is greater.

So, the pain of that thing which is required by the nature of the soul, should its contrary become established, is greater within the vital spirit. The requirements of the nature of the soul are the spiritual

knowledge of God and seeing Him. Should blindness, which is contrary (to the requirement of the nature of the soul), become established in it, there is no end to its pain. If it were not the case that souls become sick in this world before death, the pain of blindness (to the spiritual knowledge of God) would be perceived in this world in like manner. But when the hands and feet become exhausted and numbness appears in them so that if fire touched them, one would not know it immediately. If the numbness passes and (the member) is in the fire, one instantly feels great pain. In the same way, souls become fatigued in this world (and do not feel the fire), but that numbness departs at death. The fire flares in one's vital spirit instantly. This does not come from some other place, for he himself has brought it with himself. It was inside his soul, but since he did not have firm belief, he had not spotted it until he knew with sure vision. *Nay, would that ye knew with a certain knowledge! For ye will behold hellfire.* (Q. 102:5-6)

The reason that the Religious Law has explained and described physical hell and heaven so much is so that all people may know and understand it. However, whatever thou sayest, these words are considered modest, for they do not convey the harshness (of hell) and magnitude (of heaven). It is as though thou sayest to a child: "Learn something, for if thou dost not, thy father's power and authority will not be left to thee and thou wilt never achieve happiness." (The child) will not comprehend this and it will not seem very important to him. However, if thou sayest: "The teacher will punish thee," he will be afraid of this, because he understands it. Just as the teacher's punishment is real, but the fire of being deprived of the rank of his father, though also real, will not chastise a child, so too, the physical hell is real as is the fire of being deprived of the beauty of the Divine Presence. The physical hell in comparison with the hell of deprivation is nothing more than a box on the ears when put beside the deprivation of power and authority.

#### 14. THE STATIONS OF THE TRAVELS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD

Certainly thou mayest object that this explanation and detailed account is contrary to that which all of the religious scholars say and that which is found in books. They have said that these matters cannot be known save by following authority and listening.<sup>257</sup> There is no room for the insight in this.

Know that the nature of their objection to this has already been noted. This discourse is not contrary to that; for everything that they have

<sup>257</sup> "listening" (*samā‘*): Here the word *samā‘* is being used in its general sense: that is, referring to audition. *Samā‘* has another meaning, the state of ecstasy induced by music and dance, especially the whirling dance of the dervishes, and Ghazzali uses it in that sense later on. See Chapter Eight of the Second Pillar.

said in the exposition of the Hereafter is correct. However, it does not go beyond an exposition of the perceptible things. Either they did not know about the spiritual aspects, or they knew, but did not expound upon them, because most people would not comprehend them.

Anything that is physical will not be made known except by following the authority of and listening to a scholar of the Law. However, the other part is a branch of the spiritual knowledge of the true nature of the spirit (*rūh*). There is a way to learn this by means of insight and internal witnessing. It comes to the person who has separated himself from his own homeland and not stayed where he was born and in his home. He embarks on the journey on the path of religion. By this homeland, we do not mean a city or house that is the homeland of the body; the journey of the body has not value. Instead, (we mean the homeland of) the spirit which is the true nature and inmost mystery of a human being. It has a resting place that has appeared from there, and its homeland is there; hence, it has to make a journey. Along the road, there are stages for (the soul), and each station is another world.

Its first station is perceptible things, then imaginings, then suppositions, and then plausibilities,<sup>258</sup> which is the fourth station. It is in this fourth station that one will find the true nature of one's self. Before that, it has no knowledge of it.

**THE FIRST STATION:** These worlds may be understood by a parable: as long as a person is in the world of perceptible things, his degree is like that of a moth which throws itself against a lamp. It has the sense of sight, but not imagination and memory. It flies from the darkness seeking an opening. It thinks that the lamp is a window and throws itself against it. When it feels the pain of the fire, that pain does not stay in its memory, nor in its thought, because it has no thought or memory, as it has not achieved that degree. Consequently, it dashes itself against the lamp again and again until it perishes. If it had had the faculties of thought and the memory of imaginings, it would not have returned after one painful experience. When other (higher) animals are struck once, they will run away whenever they see a stick, for its image has remained in their memories. Therefore, the first stage is of perceptions.

**THE SECOND STATION:** imaginings. As long as a person is at this degree, he is the equal of the beasts. Until he experiences some irritation, he does not know that he should flee. However, if he is discomfited once, he knows to flee the next time.

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<sup>258</sup> “plausibilities” (*ma<sup>c</sup>qūlāt*): that is, things that are consistent with reason.

THE THIRD STATION: suppositions. When one reaches this degree, he is at the level of sheep and horses, which flee from unseen trouble, for they know it is an enemy and may injure them. A sheep may never have seen a wolf, and a horse may never have seen a lion, but when a wolf or lion is spotted, they flee and know that it is an enemy, while they do not run away from cattle, elephants, or camels, which are much larger in size. This is a discernment which has been implanted in them by means of which they recognize their own enemies.<sup>259</sup> But with all of this, they are not able to take precautions against that which may happen tomorrow, which is in:

THE FOURTH STATION: This is the station of plausibilities. When a person arrives here, he has passed the limit of all animals. Up to this point, he has been accompanying them. In fact, it is here that he truly reaches the world of humanity. He sees things to which the senses, images, and suppositions cannot go, and which caution him about the future. He wrests the spirit (*rūh*) and true nature of matters from their appearance and perceives them (as they truly are). He perceives the limit of the true nature of every thing, (the true nature of) which comprises the totality of that thing's forms. The things which can be perceived in this world are not infinite, for everything which is perceptible by the senses does not exist except in physical bodies, and physical bodies cannot be other than finite.

One's traffic and walking in the world of perceptible things is like walking on the earth, which all people can do. One's walking in the fourth world—in purely spirits and the true natures of affairs—is like walking on water. One's traffic in suppositions is like being in a ship, and one's degree is between water and land.

There is a station beyond the level of plausibilities which is the station of the prophets, saints, and spiritually insightful. Its similitude is like traveling on air. It was for this that the Prophet (S) was asked: "Did Jesus (A) walk on water?" He answered: "That is true, *but if his certainty had been greater, he would have traveled through the air.*"<sup>260</sup>

Therefore, the stages of a person's journey are in the worlds of conceptions until one reaches the last of the stations, which is at the degree of the angels. Thus, from the last degree of the beasts to the highest degrees of the angels, are the stations of a man's ascension, and the lows and highs are his work. One is in danger of falling to the lowest depths instead of reaching the highest heights. With reference to this danger, (this verse) was revealed: *Surely, We offered the trust to the*

<sup>259</sup> That is to say: "instinct."

<sup>260</sup> This Arabic sentence is followed in the text by Ghazzali's translation of it, omitted here. The reference is to the Prophet's Night Journey, or Ascension (*mi'raj*), which was through the air from earth to heaven

*heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they shrank from bearing it and feared it; and man bore it. Surely, he is unjust, ignorant.* (Q. 33:72)

Look at the degree of every inanimate solid body. It is unaware, therefore it is without rank. The angels are in the highest; for them there is no way beyond their own level. Indeed, the degree of every one is established upon him, as is said: *And there is none of us but has an assigned place.* (Q. 37:164) The (four-legged) beasts are the lowest of the low; there is no way for them to advance. Mankind is between the two and in a dangerous place. It is possible for him to ascend to the level of the angels or to descend to the level of the beasts. The meaning of “bearing of trust” is “assuming the covenant of danger.” Consequently, it is not possible for other than a human being to carry the burden of this trust.

The point is that if thou hadst said: “Most people have not said this,” thou wouldest know that it is not unusual for a traveler to be contrary to settled people. Most people are residents; the traveler is the exception. A person who has made sensory perceptions and images—the first station—his home and residence, will never uncover the truths and spirits of affairs. He will not be spiritual, nor will he know the rules of the spiritual. It is for that reason that there is less discussion about this in books.

## 15. DENIAL OF THE HEREAFTER BASED UPON WEAK SUPPOSITIONS IS ALSO UNLAWFUL

There is a party of fools who do not possess the power to know such matters insightfully, nor do they possess the good fortune to accept Religious Law. They are perplexed by the matter of the Hereafter and have become overcome by doubt. It may be that, as carnal appetite begins to overwhelm them and—as befits their nature—inspires them to deny the Hereafter, this denial is born in them. Satan teaches this.<sup>261</sup> They think that all that has come (to us) about the nature of hell is to inspire fear, and that all that has been said about heaven is blandishment. For these reasons, they indulge in following their appetite and cease to apply the Religious Law (to themselves). They despise those who do follow the Law, saying: “They have cheated themselves and are deceived.”

Where is there the power to inform such a fool about such secrets and proofs? Consequently, he must be invited to reflect upon one plain saying. He is told: “Even though thy mind has been mastered by the idea that the 124,000 prophets, all the saints, religious scholars, and wise men were in error and were deluded, and that thou in thine own

<sup>261</sup> “Teaches,” following the AA text (*tarbiyat*). HK has *tanzih* (transcendence, deanthropomorphism, purification, being superior to), which does not seem to fit here.

foolishness hast discovered this situation.<sup>262</sup> Well, is it not possible that the error is thine, that thou art the deluded one, that thou hast not learned the true nature of the Hereafter and hast not understood spiritual chastisement, and that thou hast not learned the aspects and similitudes of spiritual matters from the world of perceptible things?"

If the case is that he does not allow his own error, but says: "As I know that two is greater than one, in the same way I know that the soul (*rūh*) itself has no reality and it is not eternal. There can be neither ease nor torment for it after death; neither spiritual, nor physical." This person has a ruined temperament, and one should not be optimistic about him. He is one of those people about whom God Most High said: *And if thou call them to the guidance, they will even then never follow the right course.* (Q. 18:57)

But if he says: "The impossibility of this does not matter to me; that is, it is possible, but remotely. And since I do not consider this condition to be true, why should I spent my life in the cell of piety and be deprived of pleasures because of a weak supposition?"

Say to him: "Now that thou hast admitted this much, thou art obligated by the rule of reason to follow the way of the Law; for, even if the suspicion of a great danger is weak, people will flee from it. If thou intendest to eat some food and some one says: 'A snake has bitten into that food!' thou wilt withhold thy hand from it, even though thou dost suspect that that person may be lying and had said that so that he could eat it himself. However, since it is possible that he is speaking the truth, thou sayest to thyself: 'If I do not eat it, I can bear the hunger easily, but suppose I eat it and he is telling the truth? I might die!'

"In the same way, if thou fallest ill and (thy life) is in danger, and a charmer<sup>263</sup> says to thee: 'Give me a silver coin<sup>264</sup> and I shall write a charm for there on paper and draw a design on it that will make thee better.' However strong thy belief is that an amulet has absolutely no connection with health, thou sayest: 'Perhaps he is speaking the truth. Giving up a silver coin for the recitation is easy.' If an astrologer says to thee: 'When the moon reaches such-and-such point, take such-and-such bitter medicine to become better.' Thou submittest to that discomfort upon his word. Thou sayest: 'It may be that he is speaking the truth. If he is lying, still, enduring that difficulty is easy.'"

So, to a reasonable person, the word of 124,000 prophets, together with all of the great of the world, such as saints and wise men, is

<sup>262</sup> "this situation" (*in hāl*): by these words Ghazzali is referring to the supposed error and delusions of the prophets and saints.

<sup>263</sup> "charmer" (*ta'widh-shinās*): one who knows charms, spells, and incantations.

<sup>264</sup> Silver coin (*diram*): From the Greek drachma." A small silver coin.

not less than the word of an astrologer or a charmer or a Christian<sup>265</sup> physician so that, as (the sick person) says, he undertakes a small discomfort in order to escape a far greater sorrow and loss: it may be that he will obtain deliverance (from the illness). The sorrow and loss become trivial and relative. If a person calculates how long his life in this world is, and what a small fraction it is of the endless eternity which has no beginning with respect to the beginningless eternity which has no end,<sup>266</sup> he knows that taking a little trouble is insignificant when set beside such great peril. He says to himself: "If they are speaking the truth, and I endure in such torment, what is the profit of the ease of this world, the days of which are passing few? And it is possible that they speak the truth!"

Eternity means that if the entire world were filled with millet and a bird was ordered to pick up one grain of millet every thousand years until all of that millet was consumed, eternity would not be at all diminished. Therefore, how can one endure that much time in torment—whether it be spiritual, physical, or mental? How great is the span of a life in this world in comparison with that? There is no reasonable person who, understanding this concept fully, does not know that proceeding along the path of caution and being wary of such a great danger is imperative, even though this causes some trouble and even though one has this suspicion. People travel in ships across the sea for trade. They undertake long journeys and endure many hardships. They all do this for an uncertain supposition.<sup>267</sup> If (the Hereafter) is not certain for a man, well, there is a weak supposition. So, if one has mercy on oneself, one considers (the Hereafter) a possibility.

It was concerning this that the Commander of the Believers, Ali<sup>268</sup> (R) debated an atheist and said: "If it is as thou sayest, both thou and we are delivered. But if it is as we say, we are delivered and thou art fallen and will remain in eternal torment."

That which the Commander of the Believers, Ali (R) said, he said in accordance with the deficiency of the intelligence of that atheist, not because he himself had any doubts about his faith. He knew that that atheist's understanding could not support the way of certainty.

So, know that anyone whoever busies himself with anything other than providing for the Hereafter is extremely foolish. The reason for this is heedlessness and not thinking. The carnal appetites of the world themselves will not give them respite long enough to think about these

<sup>265</sup> Ghazzali uses the word *tarsā*, which usually means Christian, but can also refer to fire worshippers. It can also mean "fearful," but that does not seem appropriate here.

<sup>266</sup> Thus both texts. *Abad* means "eternity without end" and *azal* means "eternity without beginning."

<sup>267</sup> The supposition or hope that they will gain profit from their efforts.

<sup>268</sup> cAli bin Abi Tālib, the fourth caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet.

things. If that were not so, it would be obligatory upon that person who knows with certainty, that person who knows with a strong supposition, and that person who knows with a weak supposition—all of them, by the rule of reason—to be wary of that great danger and take up the way of safety and caution. *Peace!*

The discourse upon the Topic of Being a Muslim concerning the Knowledge of the Self, the Knowledge of God Most High [*exalted be His glory, great be His power, may His excellence be honored, there is no god other than He*], the Knowledge of the World, and the Knowledge of Hereafter is completed. [After this we shall commence the Pillars of Muslim Conduct, *if God Most Powerful and Unique wills it.*]<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> From the AA text.



# THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS

by Imam Ghazzali

## THE PILLARS OF BEING A MUSLIM

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,  
and We seek His aid*

Now that thou hast finished (the study of) spiritual knowledge in the Prolegomena on Being a Muslim and have come to know the self and God Most High, and have learned, too, about this world and the Hereafter, we should turn to a study the Pillars of personal behavior of Being a Muslim.<sup>270</sup>

From what has come before, it is clear that human (spiritual) happiness<sup>271</sup> lies in the knowledge of God Most High and in His service;<sup>272</sup> the basis of this knowledge has been learned from the Four Topics; let the service be learned from the Four Pillars:<sup>273</sup>

The first is that one keep oneself prepared for worship. This is the Pillar of the Acts of Worship.<sup>274</sup>

The second is that one's living, doing, and resting be according to the rules of courtesy. This is called the Pillar of Mutual Relations.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> "Being a Muslim": *musulmānī*.

<sup>271</sup> "(spiritual) happiness" (*sa'ādat*): that is, salvation.

<sup>272</sup> "service": The Persian *bandagi* has a general meaning of "slavery, bondage, servitude; service." In the language of religion, it has come to mean absolute devotion to the service of God. Ghazzali frequently uses the concrete common noun *bandah*, meaning "bondsman, slave, servant" simply to indicate a person or an individual, being a shortened form of "servant of God" (*bandah-yi khudā*). In this translation, we have eschewed "slave (of God)" in favor of "servant (of God)" for *bandah* and its Arabic equivalent *'abd*, because "slave" implies a lack of free will, choice, and ultimately responsibility for ones actions—unless the text is clearly referring to a slave or slavery. Though Ghazzali argues for a kind of predestination, at the same time he does not absolve us of personal responsibility. In the opinion of the translator, to be a slave of God is to deny personal responsibility, while to be a servant of God is a tremendous honor and responsibility. Unlike the Arabic *'abd*, the Persian *bandah* does not carry a meaning of "worshipper," nor does *bandagi* equate with *'ibādah* which means "worship" in Arabic.

<sup>273</sup> The word being translated here as "Pillar" is the Arabic *rukn* (pl. *arkān*). It is the word also commonly translated as "pillar" when referring to the five pillars of the Faith (*arkān-i dīn*) and should not be confused with that usage. See also the Translator's Preface.

<sup>274</sup> "Pillar of the Acts of Worship": *Rukn-i 'Ibādāt*.

<sup>275</sup> "Pillar of Mutual Relations": *Rukn-i Mu'amalāt*.

The third is that one keep one's soul free from the taint of repugnant characteristics. This is the Pillar of the Destroyers.<sup>276</sup>

The fourth is that one adorn one's soul with praiseworthy qualities. This is the Pillar of the Deliverers.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> “Pillar of the Destroyers”: *Rukn-i Muhlikāt*.

<sup>277</sup> “Pillar of the Deliverers”: *Rukn-i Munjīyāt*.

## THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS

BY IMAM GHAZZALI

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

### THE FIRST PILLAR: CONCERNING THE ACTS OF WORSHIP

In this Pillar, there are ten chapters:

- THE FIRST CHAPTER: [Concerning]<sup>278</sup> Correcting Orthodox Belief
- THE SECOND CHAPTER: [Concerning] Engaging in the Quest for Knowledge
- THE THIRD CHAPTER: [Concerning] Performing the Obligatory Purity
- THE FOURTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Performing Formal Prayer
- THE FIFTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Paying the Poor Rate
- THE SIXTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Fasting
- THE SEVENTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Performing the Pilgrimage
- THE EIGHTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Reciting of the Quran
- THE NINTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Remembrance and Glorification
- THE TENTH CHAPTER: [Concerning] Observing the Periods and Times of Worship<sup>279</sup>

<sup>278</sup> "Concerning" (*dar*) inserted here and in the following Chapters follows the AA text; HK does not use it.

<sup>279</sup> "private devotions and times of worship" (*wird-hā wa waqt-hā-yi "ibādat rāst dāshṭan*): See Chapter Ten and Note 625.

## CHAPTER ONE: CONCERNING THE ATTAINMENT OF ORTHODOX BELIEF<sup>280</sup>

Know that the first duty incumbent upon whoever becomes a Muslim is to know and believe the meaning of the utterance *There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God*, which he pronounces with his tongue, understands in his soul, and believes so that he entertains no doubt about it. When he has believed and his soul is established firmly upon (that belief)—so that no doubt can touch it—it is sufficient as the basis of being a Muslim. Knowing it with evidence and proof is an individual duty<sup>281</sup> incumbent upon every Muslim. The Prophet (S) did not command the Arabs to seek proofs, to study theology, or to look for doubts and the replies to them; rather, he was content with belief and faith. More is not appropriate for the degree of the common folk.

However, there will inevitably be a group of people who know the manner of expressing themselves in speech and can explain the reasons for this belief. If someone falls into doubt, the words of (such a speaker) can remove that doubt before it spreads to the illiterate. This art is called “scholastic theology.”<sup>282</sup> It is a collective duty;<sup>283</sup> one or two people possessing such abilities are enough for every town. Let belief suffice for the illiterate and let the theologian be the provost and guardian of their belief.

But beyond these two stations,<sup>284</sup> there is another way to the true nature of spiritual knowledge. The beginning of this is earnest striving: so long as a person does not travel the way of earnest striving and ascetic discipline (completely, he will not attain that degree and it is not right for him to claim that (he has). The harm of (claiming) that is greater than its benefit. He is like the person who takes medicine before abstaining (from food). It is to be feared that he will perish, for that medicine will change according to the ingredients<sup>285</sup> of his stomach and negate the effect of the medicine, and his discomfort and illness will increase.

<sup>280</sup> The difference between the title of this chapter and the form it is given in Ghazzali's Table of Contents directly above is in accordance with both texts.

<sup>281</sup> “individual duty”: *fard-i ‘ayn*. See Note 974.

<sup>282</sup> “scholastic theology”: *kalām*. Guillaume quotes the following definition of *kalām*: “the science of the foundations of the faith and the intellectual proofs in support of the theological verities.” *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. Sir Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 265.

<sup>283</sup> “collective duty”: *fard-i kifāyat*. See Note 974.

<sup>284</sup> “these two stations”: the common faith of the heart and faith based upon deductive reasoning.

<sup>285</sup> “ingredients” (*akhlāt*): or “humors,” a reference to the four humors of the body: blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy.

The contents of the Prolegomena were a proof-giver and an indication of the true nature of spiritual knowledge so that any one who is so inclined may pursue it. No one can seek its true nature save the person who has no ties to this world to distract him. Nothing will occupy him during his entire lifetime except the seeking of God Most High; but this is a difficult and lengthy task.

Consequently, we refer to that which is the nourishment of all folk—and that is the belief of the orthodox—so that each person may establish this belief in his soul, for this belief will be the seed of his (spiritual) happiness.

### DISCLOSING BELIEF IN ISLAM

Know that thou hast been created and that thou hast a Creator Who is the Creator of all the universe and all that it contains. He is One. He has neither partner nor associate. He is Unique, for He has no peer. He always was; His existence has no beginning. He always shall be; there is not end to His existence. His existence in eternity and infinity is necessary, for annihilation cannot touch Him. His existence is by His own essence. He needs nothing; but nothing is unneedful of Him. Rather, He is established by His Own essence, and everything else is established through Him.

### TRANSCENDENCE

In His Own essence, He is neither substance, nor accident. He does not manifest Himself in any (physical) body. He is not like anything else, and nothing is like Him. He has no form. Questions of quantity, purpose, and manner do not pertain to Him. He is free from anything that be conceived by the mind or imagination concerning His quantity and quality, for He is the Creator of all the attributes of created things. He was not created by any attribute; rather, He is the Creator of all that may be imagined or supposed. Smallness, largeness, and amount do not affect Him as they are attributes of physical bodies in the world, and He has no physical body, nor is He connected with any physical body. He is neither on nor at any place. Moreover, He Himself occupies no space and cannot be restricted by limitations of space. All that is in the universe is beneath His Throne, and the Throne is subsumed to His power. He is above the Throne, but not as a body above a body, for He is not a physical body. The Throne does not support or carry Him; rather, the Throne and its bearers are all borne by Him and they are laden with His grace and power.

Today, He is of the same character that He was in eternity without beginning before He created the Throne; He shall endure in the same way into eternity without end, for neither He nor His attributes are

affected by change or alteration. It would not befit God if change were (to affect) an imperfect attribute. If (change) were (to affect) a perfect attribute it would have been imperfect and in need of this perfection. Need is (for) the created and does not befit God.

Since He is free from all of the attributes of created things, in this world He is something to be known, and in the next world, to be seen. Just as in this world He is known to be ineffable and inscrutable, so in the next world He will be seen ineffable and inscrutable, but that seeing will not be of the nature of the seeing of this world.

### POWER

While He does not resemble anything, He has power over all things. His omnipotence is perfect, unaffected by inability, deficiency, or weakness. Indeed, whatever He has desired, He has done; and whatever He desires, He does. The seven heavens, the earth, the Throne, the Pedestal, and all that exists are subdued by His power and subservient in its grasp. No other holds any thing. He has neither aide nor companion in creation.

### KNOWLEDGE

He knows everything there is to be known. His knowledge encompasses all things. Nothing proceeds, from on high to the earth, without His knowing it; for all proceed from Him and appear from His power. He knows the number of the grains of sand in the desert and the leaves on the trees, and the number of thoughts in heart. And the atoms of the earth and the air are disclosed to His knowledge, as well as the number of the heavens.

### WILL

All that there is in the world, all is by His desire and will. Nothing—of the few to the numerous, the big and the little, good and evil, obedient and rebellious, unbelief and belief, profit and loss, increase and decrease, sorrow and ease, sickness and health—proceeds except by His decree and pleasure, and by His judgment and command. If all the world were gathered together—jinn, mankind, devils, and angels, they would not be able to move one particle of the world, or lift it, or increase it, or decrease it without His desire: all would be helpless and incapable. Indeed, nothing comes to pass save that which He desires. Whatever He desires to be cannot be prevented by anything or anyone. All that was, all that is, and all that shall be, are by His contrivance and decree.

### HEARING AND SIGHT

Just as He knows all that there is to be known, He sees and hears all that there is to be seen or heard. Near and far are equal in His hearing; darkness and light are equal in His sight. The sound of the feet of an ant in the black of night does not escape His power of hearing; the color and shape of a worm under the earth is not beyond the power of His sight. His sight is not by eye, nor is His hearing by ear, just as His knowledge is not by thought and contrivance; for His creating is not by means of (physical) tools.

### SPEECH

His commands are compulsory upon all creation and His information—the information He has given about anything—is truth. His promises and His threats are real. His commands, notices, promises, and threats are all His speech. Just as He is Living, Knowing, Capable of anything, Seeing, and Hearing, He also speaks. He spoke to Moses (A) without an intermediary. His speech is not by mouth, tongue, lips, and teeth. As it is in the soul of a person, it has no articulation or sound; that is, it is not in distinct sounds, for the speech of God Most High is purer and superior to those characteristics. The Quran, the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, and all the books of the prophets are His speech. His speech is one of His attributes, and all of His attributes are eternal and have always existed.<sup>286</sup> As the essence of God, *may He be praised and exalted*, is known in our souls and remembered with our tongues—and our knowledge is created, but the Known is eternal. Our remembrance is created, but the Remembered is eternal. The essence of His speech is, in the same way, eternal and kept in our souls, read with our tongues, and written in books. The thing kept is uncreated, but the keeping is created. The thing read is uncreated, but the reading is created. The written word is uncreated, but the writing is created.

### ACTS

He is All-Knowing. Everything in the universe is His creation. Everything that He created has been created so that nothing could be better or finer than it is. If all the intellects of all reasoning creatures were combined and they pondered how to make this kingdom more beautiful or to arrange it in a better fashion, they would be unable (to do

<sup>286</sup> This declaration affirms the view of the Ash'arites (of whom Ghazzali was the greatest thinker) that the Quran was eternal in God, but its expression in words or human language had been in time. Syedur Rahman, *An Introduction to Islamic Philosophy* (Dacca: Mullick Bros., 1956), p. 125.

so), for they would either omit something or add something.<sup>287</sup> Those who think that they could improve upon it are in error and ignore the mystery of its wisdom and advantage. Indeed, they are like the blind person who enters a palace and all of its furnishing are in their proper places, but he does not see them. When he stumbles on something, he complains: "Why did they put it in my way?" He himself is not on the (right) path, for he does not see the way.

So, everything He created, He created justly and wisely, and He created it perfectly. He created things as they ought to be. If something could have been more perfect than it is and He did not create it that way, then He would have been either incapable or miserly, and these two attributes are impossible for Him. Thus, whatever He created, including sorrow, illness, poverty, ignorance, and weakness—all are just. Oppression cannot come from Him, for oppression is to seize another's property, and it is not possible for Him to seize another's property and never shall be, because it is not possible for there to be a proprietor other than He! Whatever is and was and may be, whoever is and was and may be—all are His property and He is their sole proprietor. Therefore, He is incomparable and partnerless.

### THE HEREAFTER

He created the world of two kinds: the world of physical bodies and the world of spirits. He made the physical world the stopping place of human spirits so that they might collect from it the provisions for the next world. Each person has an allotted time to be in this world. At its end is death and (his time) cannot be increased or decreased. When death comes, the spirit is separated from the body.

At the Resurrection, which is the Day of Reckoning and Retribution, the soul is given a body,<sup>288</sup> revived, and all are roused. Every person sees his own deeds written on a scroll so that he may be reminded of all that he has done. The amount of his rebellion and his sinning is made known and weighed in a scale that is prepared for this function and does not resemble any earthly scale.

### THE BRIDGE

Then, all are commanded to cross the Bridge. That bridge is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword blade. Everyone who, in

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<sup>287</sup> Thereby throwing it out of the balance of perfection.

<sup>288</sup> "body" (*kālbud*): this body is different from the earthly body, as Ghazzali explains in the Prolegomena. See above.

this world, stood firmly on the Right Path<sup>289</sup> shall pass across that bridge with ease; but whoever did not know the right path shall not find a footing on the bridge and shall fall into hell.

At the beginning of the bridge, they will be stopped and questioned about all that they did. The true nature of honesty will be sought from the honest, while the hypocrites and the doubters will be pointed out and disgraced.

One group will be sent to heaven without any reckoning; another group will be questioned gently. However, another group (will be questioned) harshly and in the end all of the unbelievers will be consigned to hell and none will ever be released from it. Of the Muslims, the obedient will be sent to heaven and the rebellious to hell. Accordingly, whoever receives the intercession of the prophets or the saints is forgiven; whoever does not is carried off to hell and punished according to the amount of his sins, but in the end, he will be brought to heaven through the intercession of the Prophet (S).

#### THE MESSENGER

As God Most High has ordained this and has arranged the works and conditions of a person thus, so that some are causes of his happiness and others are causes of his misfortunes, and since a person cannot comprehend these things on his own, He created messengers out of the wisdom of His grace and mercy. He decreed that some persons who, in the eternity without beginning are decreed on the perfection of their (spiritual) happiness, be informed of this secret. He gave them a message and sent them to the people to disclose to them the path to happiness and misfortune so that no one may have an excuse against God, may He be honored and glorified.

And, last of all, He sent our Messenger (S). He caused his prophethood to reach the level of perfection so that nothing more could be added to it. Because of this, He made him the Seal of the Prophets; no other prophet will come after him. He commanded all creation, human and jinn, to follow him. He made him the Lord of all of the messengers, and He made his Helpers and Companions the best of helpers and companions, *may God bless them all.*

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<sup>289</sup> The Right Path (*sirāt al-mustaqīm*): This is a phrase taken from the First Chapter of the Holy Quran: *Guide us on the Right Path.* (Q. 1:5) The word used for "bridge" in this section is the same as that used for "path" in the Quran: *sirāt*. This section is about the narrow bridge over the fires of hell that the resurrected must pass over to gain paradise. If their sins outweigh their good deeds, they will unable to pass across and fall

## CHAPTER TWO: CONCERNING THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Know that the Prophet (S) spoke thus: “*The quest for knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim.*” Seeking knowledge is a religious duty incumbent upon all Muslims.

All of the scholars have disputed (about the meaning of his words): “What knowledge is this (to which the Prophet referred)?” The scholastic theologians<sup>290</sup> say that it is the science of scholastic theology by which the spiritual knowledge of God Most Might is obtained. The religious jurisprudents say that it is the knowledge of religious jurisprudence by which the lawful and unlawful are distinguished. The Traditionists say that is the study of the Traditions and the Practice (of the Prophet), which are the sources of the religious studies. The mystics say that is the knowledge of the states of the soul, for the way of the servant (of God) to God is through his soul.

Each of these groups exalts its own knowledge. Our view is that one particular knowledge is not meant (by the Prophet’s words) and that neither are all of these studies required. However, it is a distinction that gives rise to this difficulty:

Know that whoever becomes a Muslim or reaches puberty at mid-morning is not required to learn these sciences, but knowing the meaning of “*There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God*” becomes obligatory immediately. He knows this when he accepts orthodox belief,<sup>291</sup> which we have addressed in the previous chapter.<sup>292</sup> However, this does not mean that he must master the intellectual proofs for this; that is not obligatory. Instead, he accepts and believes. (The knowledge of) all these details is not obligatory (upon every Muslim) either, but in general he must believe in the attributes of God Most High, the attributes of the Messenger (S), the attributes of the Hereafter, Paradise, hell, and the Resurrection. He has a God of such a nature; on His Prophet’s word, he is answerable to Him. If he is obedient, he will achieve (spiritual) happiness after death, but if he sins, he will be treated harshly.

After learning this, he becomes obligated to know two kinds of knowledge: one pertains to the soul, the other pertains to physical acts.<sup>293</sup>

<sup>290</sup> “scholastic theologians” (*mutakallimān*): The students and expounders of *kalām*, See Note 282 above.

<sup>291</sup> “orthodox belief” (*i'tiqād-i ahl-i sunnat*): i.e., the belief of those who follow the practice (*sunnat*) of the Prophet.

<sup>292</sup> Chapter One, above.

<sup>293</sup> “physical acts”: literally, acts of the members of the body (*a'māl-i jawārih*); acts involving the body.

That which pertains to physical acts is of two kinds: one is the knowledge of things which ought to be done, the other is the knowledge of things which ought not to be done.

AS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE of what ought to be done, it is thus: If a person becomes a Muslim in the mid-morning, when it is time for the noon obligatory formal prayer,<sup>294</sup> it is an obligation upon him to learn about obligatory purity and formal prayer. That much is a religious obligation,<sup>295</sup> both points. However, the knowledge of that much which is the Practice of the Prophet is not a religious obligation; rather, it is the Prophet's Practice. When, for example, the time for sunset prayer comes, it is obligatory upon him to know that that formal prayer has three bows. No more than is obligatory.<sup>296</sup>

And (for the new Muslim), when the moon of Ramadan appears, fasting becomes an obligation. He must know to declare his Intention and that eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse are forbidden from dawn to sunset.

And if he has twenty Nishaburi dinars, it does not then immediately become obligatory upon him to learn about the obligatory poor rate;<sup>297</sup> but after the passing of a full year, it becomes an obligation (upon him) to know the amount of the poor rate, how much should be given, to whom it should be given, and under what conditions. A knowledge of the (rites of the) Pilgrimage is not obligatory until one wishes to perform the journey. Its time is during his entire life.<sup>298</sup>

In the same way, whenever a matter occurs to one, whenever one has to perform some (religious) act, it is at that time that he is required to know it. For example, when he wants to marry, then he must know about

<sup>294</sup> "obligatory formal prayer": This is a religious service, not "prayer" in the commonly accepted English usage, with explicit rules, forms, and requirements. In this sense it resembles a mass more than the simple utterance of a prayer to one's Creator. Therefore, in this translation we are employing this accurate (although somewhat cumbersome) phrase where Ghazzali uses the Persian term *namāz*, the equivalent of the Arabic *salāh/salāt*. What is commonly called prayer in English is part of the meaning of *du'ā*, which we have generally translated in this book as "supplication." A *du'ā* may be either personal or group, but it has informality not found in *namāz*.

<sup>295</sup> "religious obligation" (*farīdah*): a duty imposed by God that is shirked at the peril of one's eternal soul, except in extraordinary circumstances.

<sup>296</sup> That is, the obligatory prayer of three bows. Though praiseworthy, the knowledge of the additional sunset prayers, in keeping with the practice of the Prophet, is not a religious obligation in the sense that the three-bow prayer is.

<sup>297</sup> "poor rate": (*zakāt*). Twenty Nishaburi dinars: this is the amount that Ghazzali regards as the threshold for payment of the poor rate. The dinar in his period was usually a gold coin. Dinars were minted in various weights.

<sup>298</sup> That is, the greater Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) may be performed any time during his lifetime, subject to certain limitations and requirements: health, financial ability, responsibilities, sanity, majority, etc.

its rules and obligations. He must know what the wife's rights over the husband are: that he not approach her (carnally) during her menses, nor after that until she has purified herself. He must learn other things related to (marriage) in the same way.

If, for example, he has a trade, knowledge of that trade is obligatory upon him, so that, if he were a merchant, he must know what constitutes usury. Indeed, it becomes necessary for him to learn all of the rules of sale so that he may avoid illegal sales. It was for that that 'Umar<sup>299</sup> (R) beat the merchants of the public market and sent them to learn (the rules of their trade), saying: "Whoever does not know the law of business should not sit in the markets; for he may earn unlawful profits and take usury while not realizing it!"

In the same way, there is a special knowledge for every profession. If, for example, one is a cupper,<sup>300</sup> he must know what things may be cut from a person, which tooth to pull, what is the most dangerous, what medicines to apply to wounds, and the like. These kinds of knowledge alter with the circumstances of each person. It is not obligatory for a draper to master the science of cupping; nor is it obligatory upon the cupper to master the knowledge of the draper.

THESE ARE EXAMPLES of the knowledge of what ought not to be done. As for what ought not to be done, knowledge of this is also obligatory, but is not the same for each person. If a person is one of those who wears silk clothes, or is in a place where wine is drunk and pork is eaten, or is in a place taken by force,<sup>301</sup> or he possesses unlawful property,<sup>302</sup> it is incumbent upon the religious teachers to teach him and to tell him what is forbidden so that he may refrain from such things.

<sup>299</sup> 'Umar: 'Umar bin al-Khattab, the second of the rightly guided caliphs, ruled from Madinah AH13/634CE to AH23/644CE. His importance in the development of the Islamic empire and the spread of Islam is incalculable. During his reign Islamic sway spread from the Arabian Peninsula to Egypt, the Levant and Iran, an area larger than Western Europe. A good administrator, an energetic and practical man, he did not let practicality or the power of empire compromise his firm faith in the Prophet and his message of Islam; he is famous for his humility and lack of pomp and ceremony. He was abstemious in his personal life and demanded high standards from others. His daughter Hafsa was the Prophet's third wife. He was assassinated by a Persian slave, who was angered over 'Umar's decision regarding the slave's dispute with his master, a matter or a few dirhams.

<sup>300</sup> "cupper" (*hajjām*): a practitioner of cupping, a method of drawing blood to the surface of the body by means of a glass vessel or cup evacuated by heat. It is closely related to venisection and was a common treatment of certain illnesses well into the 19th CE century. A medieval cupper was also often called upon to perform other medical tasks including surgery.

<sup>301</sup> "a place taken by force": a place seized illegally or usurped, such as the property of a tyrant.

<sup>302</sup> "unlawful property" (*māl-i ḥarām*): or, property unlawfully acquired.

If he is at a place, for example, where there is a mixing with women, it is obligatory upon him to know which of them are of close relationship and which are not,<sup>303</sup> and which of them he may look upon and which of them he may not.

This, too, changes according to circumstances, for each person is exposed to different situations. It is not necessary for him to learn what others should know. It is not obligatory upon women to know, for example, that it is unlawful to divorce a woman during her menses, which learning is obligatory upon man who wishes to divorce.

AS FOR THOSE THINGS which pertain to the soul, they are of two kinds: one is related to the states of the soul, the other to beliefs.

AS FOR THAT WHICH IS RELATED to the states of the soul, this is an example: It is necessary to know that haughtiness and envy are unlawful, hypocrisy is unlawful, hatred is unlawful, self-conceit is unlawful, suspicion is unlawful, and the like. (Knowing) this is an individual obligation for all people, for no one is devoid of such feelings. Therefore, knowledge of this and knowledge of its treatment is necessary, as this is a kind of common ailment and cannot be remedied without knowledge. But (the knowledge of) such things as the (the laws of) selling, forward buying, renting, mortgaging, and the like which religious jurisprudence addresses are not obligations upon all. An individual obligation applies to the person who wishes to perform the transaction, and most people have no need of these things. However, the soul cannot be immune from those states.

AS FOR THE OTHER KIND that is related to belief: It is having a doubt in one's belief. It is incumbent upon such a person to remove it from his soul whenever that doubt concerns a belief which is inherently an obligation, or concerning a belief in which doubt is not permitted.

So, from all of this, it has become known that learning is a religious duty imposed upon all Muslims. No Muslim does not stand in need of some kind of knowledge, but such (necessary) knowledge is not of one kind. The obligations upon a person vary. Indeed, they change with conditions and times. However, there is no one without some kind of a need for knowledge. It is for this that the Prophet (S) said: "There is no Muslim for whom the seeking of knowledge is not a religious duty." That is, the search for the knowledge which he needs in his affairs.

<sup>303</sup> "relationship": *mahram*. This refers to persons of the opposite sex who are of such a relationship that marriage is impossible with them, for example: siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. Since marriage with them is impossible, association is permissible. Persons of the opposite sex beyond these relationships are regarded as *nā mahram*, and their for association with them can only be in carefully controlled circumstances, if at all.

**EXCURSUS: THE EXCUSE OF IGNORANCE IS NOT  
ACCEPTABLE IN RELIGION**

Since it has been made known that it is incumbent upon every person to learn the knowledge which he (needs) in the way of his dealings, thou hast come to realize that the illiterate is continually in danger, for he may have to do something, but he will do it ignorantly. He does not know that there is a (religious) rule regarding it. Whenever a person is overcome by the need to know some aspect of religious law—and such situations are many—he cannot take refuge in ignorance.

For example, if a person lies with his wife during her menstrual period, or after it but before her purifying bath, and then says: "I did not know the rule about this," he is not excused.

And if a woman purifies herself before the dawn and does not make up the sunset and early evening obligatory prayers (of the previous evening) because she does not know to do this, or if a man divorces his wife while she is menstruating and does not know that this is unlawful, they are not excused. It will be said to him: "We told thee that acquiring knowledge is a duty. Why didst thou withhold (thyself) from this duty and fall into unlawfulness?" Such behavior is excusable only if it should be some unusual and unexpected occurrence.

**EXCURSUS: NO WORK IS MORE HONORABLE THAN KNOWLEDGE**

Now that thou hast learned that the illiterate person is never free from this danger, it becomes apparent from this that no activity in which a person engages will be superior to and more agreeable than learning. Whatever profession or trade a person engages in will be for the acquisition of the things of this world. Study is better than other occupations for most of the people in this world, because a student will be in one of these four states:

*ONE]:<sup>304</sup> He is self-sufficient in the things of the world, either through inheritance for some other reason. Knowledge will guard his property and be the cause of his dignity and respect in the world. It will be the cause of his (spiritual) happiness in the Hereafter. This is one kind.*

*TWO: Another is not well-endowed with the things of the world, but is content with what he has and can make do with that. He knows the value of poverty in being a Muslim: the poor shall be in heaven five hundred years before the rich. For this person, knowledge will be the cause of his tranquillity in this world and his (spiritual) happiness in the Hereafter.*

<sup>304</sup> From the AA text.

**THREE:** A third person is he who knows that after acquiring knowledge he will receive a sufficient, lawful income from either the public treasury or the hands of the Muslims, without his pursuing the unlawful or accepting something from the hand of a tyrannical ruler.

Thus, for these three types, the acquisition of knowledge in this world is the best occupation.

**FOUR:** The fourth kind is the one who does not possess his own resources and his aim in learning is (acquiring the things of) this world. The age is such that one cannot seek one's needs except either from the stipend from a ruler, which comes from the wages of tribute and oppression; or from the people, (but) he cannot seek it without hypocrisy and degradation. It would be better for this type—or for anyone who acquires knowledge for the purpose of acquiring rank and wealth and who achieves wealth through knowledge—that he engage in some trade after he has finished his studies, for such a person becomes a devil of the human kind and many persons are ruined by him. Any uneducated person who looks at this person's receiving the forbidden and his chicanery in his amassing the things of this world may imitate him. The corruption among the people caused by such a person is much greater than his good. The fewer such learned men there are, the better! It is to be preferred that the worldly seek worldly things and not (become involved in) affairs of religion.

If some one should object that that person's knowledge will lead to the right path, as some have said: "*We studied the knowledge of other than God, but the knowledge turned us to God*"—we have not acquired knowledge for God, but it has led us to the Way of God—the answer is this: It was the study of the Book, the Practice of the Prophet, the secrets of the Hereafter, and the truths of the Religious Law which brought them to the Way of God. Furthermore, there must have been something inside them that was repulsed by their own gluttony for the world. They saw the great ones of the faith who had distanced themselves from the world, and they desired to emulate them. As that was their knowledge, and the age was thus, they were hopeful that they would take on the nature of their knowledge, not that their knowledge would become their servant.

However, these subjects that are studied today, such as disputation, religious creed, scholastic theology, narrative, and calamity,<sup>305</sup> and these teachers in this era who have made all of their knowledge a snare (to capture the things) of this world—association with them and learning from them does not turn a man away from the way of (seeking) the world. *There is no information like examination.* Behold! Are most of them scholars of this world, or are they scholars of the

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<sup>305</sup> "disputation" (*khalāf*), "religious creed" (*madhhab*), "scholastic theology" (*kalām*), "narrative" (*qasāṣ*), and "calamity" (*tāmāt*), that is, the resurrection.

Hereafter? Is there a benefit for the people in witnessing their doings, or is there harm?

Yet, if there is some place a person adorned with piety following the way of the scholars amongst the forefathers, teaching knowledge in which there is fright and caution about the delusion of the world, then association with and observing such a person will be of benefit to any person, not to speak of being taught by him! The knowledge one learns will be useful; that is more important than anything else is. Useful knowledge is that which informs him of the contempt for the world and shows him the danger of the trials of the Hereafter. It will make plain the ignorance and foolishness of those who have devoted themselves to this world and who have turned their faces away from the next world, so that he will recognize the blight of envy, hypocrisy, conceit, greed, avarice, and love for this world and know its remedy. This knowledge is like water for the thirsty and like medicine for the sick for a person who is greedy for the world.

But the occupation of this person<sup>306</sup> with religious jurisprudence, scholastic theology, disputation, and literature is like the sick man who takes medicine too powerful for his illness. Most of these studies sow the seeds of envy, hypocrisy, libertinism, hostility, greed, mercenariness, pride, and ambition for rank in the soul. The more he studies, the more firmly these things become established in his soul. Since he is mixing with a class skilled in divine law, for that is what they are engaged in, he will become so that even if he wants to repent from this way, it will be difficult and he will not be able to do so.

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<sup>306</sup> That is, the person greedy for the world.

## CHAPTER THREE: CONCERNING OBLIGATORY PURITY

Know that God, *may He be praised and exalted*, says: *Truly God loves the repentant and those who are pure.*<sup>307</sup> (Q. 2:222) God loves the pure. The Messenger (S) said: *Purity is half of faith.* He also said: *Islam is based upon cleanliness.* Therefore, do not suppose that all of the virtue and importance of purification refers (just) to the body and clothing and the use of water; rather, purity has four levels:

THE FIRST LEVEL is the purification of the inmost secret of the soul from everything other than God Most High. As He says: *Say 'God' and then leave them.* (Q. 6:91)<sup>308</sup> The point of this is that when one is empty of all but God Most High, one may become occupied with and immersed in God Most High. This is the true realization of the phrase *There is no god but God.* This is the degree of the faith of the truly righteous.<sup>309</sup> Being cleansed of other-than-God<sup>310</sup> is one half of faith. Until one is cleansed of other-than-God, one cannot be adorned with the remembrance of God Most High.

THE SECOND LEVEL is the purification of the external aspect of the soul from such foul traits as envy, pride, hypocrisy, greed, enmity, frivolousness, etc., in order to be adorned with pure and approved characteristics, such as humility, contentment, repentance, patience, fear, hope, love, etc. This is the degree of the faith of the devout. Being cleansed of blameworthy characteristics is half of faith.

THE THIRD LEVEL is the purification of the limbs and parts of the body from sins such as backbiting, lying, eating forbidden things, treachery, looking upon unrelated persons of the opposite sex,<sup>311</sup> etc., so that one may be adorned with courtesy and obedience in all matters. This is the degree of the faith of ascetics. Keeping one's parts clean of all forbidden things is half of faith.

<sup>307</sup> "pure": the word used here, *mutatahhirin*, refers to the state of purity called *tahārat* which has the specialized meaning of being purified (by *wudū'* or *ghusl*) and in a state to perform certain religious obligations such as formal prayer (*namāz*) and the reading the Quran.

<sup>308</sup> In the Quran, the sentence is completed thus: *Say 'God' and leave them to their wallowing as they play.*

<sup>309</sup> "truly righteous": *siddīqān*.

<sup>310</sup> "other-than-God": *ghayr Haqq*.

<sup>311</sup> See Note 303 above.

THE FOURTH LEVEL is keeping the body and clothing free of impurities so that all of the body may be adorned with bowing and prostration and the fundamentals of formal prayer. This is the degree of Islamic purity; for the behavioral difference between Muslims and unbelievers is in this prayer. This purity too is half of faith.

Therefore, in this manner it may be understood that at all of the levels of faith, purity is one half. By the rule that half or more is the thing, (the Messenger) said: *Islam is established upon cleanliness*. Then, this purity of body and clothing, which all pay attention to and strive for, is the lowest degree of the purities. However, because this is easier and the carnal self also partakes of it—for cleanliness is pleasant, and the self is at ease in it, and all persons can see it and thereby know of one's purity—it is for this reason easier upon the people.

However, the carnal self has no profit in the purification of the soul from envy, pride, hypocrisy, and love of the world and the purification of the body from sin and evil. The eyes of people do not fall upon it—for it is visible to God, and not to mankind, and for this reason not everyone shows an interest in it.

#### EXCURSUS: UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS IS PRECAUTION LAWFUL?

This obligatory purification (of the body), although it is of the lowest degree, has much virtue, too, but on the condition that its rules are observed and that anxious distraction and excess do not affect it. When it reaches the limit of anxiety and excessiveness, it becomes repugnant and disliked, and it may become an offense. The precautions which the Sufis practice such as wearing footgear,<sup>312</sup> wrapping the head with one's drawers (so that the head and face not be dirtied), requiring absolutely pure water, keeping a water pot so that no one puts his hand in it<sup>313</sup>—all of these are good, but they should not complain about anyone among the religious jurisprudents who does not observe these things, except under certain conditions. Moreover, it is not for Sufis to complain at all about jurisprudents and others who do not take such (extra) precautions, for these precautions are good, but with six conditions:

*THE FIRST CONDITION* is that because of the time they take, they keep one from worthier matters. For example, if one is prevented by the

<sup>312</sup> "footgear" (*jūrāb*): the Persian so translated can refer to boots, socks, or stockings: in other words, something on the feet. In modern Persian, it tends to refer to socks and stockings, things made of cloth, with separate words for shoes, boots, sandals, and the like.

<sup>313</sup> So as to eliminate the possibility of pollution of the water. The water pot is used for making ablutions and for cleansing oneself after natural bodily functions.

time consumed with these precautions from learning some knowledge, if one has the ability to do so, or meditating upon something so that an increase (of available time) leads to an insight, or working to provide for one's family or oneself, so that one will not have to beg from another or consume things which people should not, one should not occupy oneself with these (extra) precautions, for the other (obligations) are more important than the (extra) precautions of purity.

It is for this reason that the Companions of the Prophet never engaged in such precautions. They were busy with earnest striving in God's way, seeking knowledge, and matters more important than those (precautions). That was why they went barefooted, performed their prayers upon the earth, sat on the ground, and wiped their hands after eating on the soles of their feet. They were not wary of the sweat of beasts of burden, for they made a greater effort to purify the soul rather than the body. So, if a person is of this nature, the Sufis should not complain of him. However, it is not fitting for a person who, out of laziness, does not observe these precautions to complain of those who observe them, for observing them is superior to not observing them.

*THE SECOND CONDITION* is that one keep oneself from hypocrisy and frivolity in this, for whoever observes these precautions proclaims from head to toe: "I am an ascetic because I keep myself so pure." An avidity is born in him so that he fears lest he fall in the opinion of the people. He must examine himself in this and place his feet on the earth before people, travel the path of leniency, and make his preparations of precaution in private.<sup>314</sup> If his self struggles in this, he realizes that the calamity of hypocrisy has infected him. In this case, it is obligatory upon him that he travel the path of leniency, walk with naked feet, sit upon the earth, pray upon the bare earth, and cease the precautions. For hypocrisy is forbidden and the precautions are a recommended practice.<sup>315</sup> As he cannot avoid the forbidden except by ceasing to practice the precautions, it is obligatory upon him to abandon them.

*THE THIRD CONDITION* is to follow the way of leniency sometimes, but not turn away from the precautions incumbent upon oneself, just as the Messenger (S) purified himself with the water pot of a

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<sup>314</sup> Ghazzali is not condemning excessive caution exhibited by many of the pious in following the expanded minutiae of the laws of purity, but he is pointing out that they can be impractical for ordinary folk in their daily lives and furthermore, can ensnare the practitioner in the vices of pride and contempt and ultimately hypocrisy with respect to those unable to devote so much time or resources to these things. Instead of making a public display of these preparations, he advises that such precautions be taken in private.

<sup>315</sup> Hypocrisy is forbidden (*harām*) by God's law. Violations of the Practice of the Prophet are at a lower level of gravity.

polytheist. ‘Umar (R) purified himself with the pitcher of a Christian woman. Most of the time, they performed their prayers upon the earth and they honored more those who slept upon the ground with nothing between them and the bare earth. Then, as one separates oneself from their conduct and deems it inappropriate, and one’s self does not permit one to conform to their (customs); that is sufficient proof that the self has found an eagerness for this precaution. (In this situation), it is important that one refrain from this.

*THE FOURTH CONDITION* is that one should abstain from any precaution which annoys the hearts of Muslims, for vexing the hearts of Muslims is forbidden, while abandoning the precaution is not; as when a person extends his hand to take one’s hand in greeting or in embrace—and that person’s hand is sweaty—it is forbidden to withhold one’s hand. Rather, a good nature and an approach that delight the soul of a Muslim in such a situation are more blessed and superior than a thousand precautions. In the same way, if a person steps upon one’s prayer-rug, uses one’s water pot for purification, or drinks water from one’s jug, it is not appropriate to forbid him and show displeasure; for when the Messenger (S) requested water from Zamzam, ‘Abbas (R) said: “Many have put their hands in that water and muddied it. Let me find a special pail and draw water for thee.” He replied: “No, I prefer the blessing of the hands of the Muslims.”

Most of these ignorant ascetics<sup>316</sup> do not know of these subtleties and pull back from a person who does not follow the precautions, injuring his feelings. It may happen that they will speak sharply to their (own) fathers, mothers, brothers, or friends if they touch their water pots or clothing. All of this is forbidden! How could it be lawful to insult people, which is forbidden, because of a precaution, which is not obligatory? Most of those who do this, being afflicted with arrogance, consider it a rare opportunity to withdraw from someone in this way in order to annoy him and to display their own purity and magnificence! They call others “those who have non-smelling noses,”<sup>317</sup> while the Companions used to accept them gently.

<sup>316</sup> “ignorant ascetics”: literally “ignorant reciters of the Quran” (*qurrā’ān-i jāhil*). “Reciters of the Quran” (*qurrā’ān*): the pious and holy; ascetics. While reading of the Quran is of course praiseworthy and an act of great piety, the term is also used perjoratively to refer to those make a show of it. There is often a suggestion of the taint of professional piety about them in literature.

<sup>317</sup> This word, *bi-khushm* or *bi-khashm*, has prompted lengthy notes in both AA and HK. Among the varied proposals, it may mean a person whose sense of smell does not function or “something resembling some filth” (Dr. Minawi). Steingass suggests for *khasham* “offensive smell of the nose from polypus, ozena.”

If a person just uses stones in cleansing himself (after passing urine or a bowel movement),<sup>318</sup> they consider this act itself a great sin! All of this is from the meanness of their character and a proof of their internal impurity. It is a religious obligation to purify oneself of this meanness, for all such things are causes for destruction, while refraining from the precautions is not a cause for destruction.

*THE FIFTH CONDITION* is to observe those very precautions in eating, dressing, and speaking which are more important. When one refrains from that which is more important, it is a proof that one is cautious out of self-adornment or out of habit; just as the person who eats something unclean when hunger does not compel him and then will not perform the obligatory prayers until he has washed his hands and mouth. He does not know this much, that the eating of whatever is unclean is forbidden! If it is unclean, why does he eat it unnecessarily? If it is not unclean, why does he wash his hands? Why does he pray on a cloth upon which illiterates may have sat? Why does he eat the food prepared in the homes of the common folk? Precaution about the purity of the morsel is more important, yet most of these people eat food prepared in the homes of merchants and Turks and perform their prayers on their cloths. This is not the sign of candor in this matter.

*THE SIXTH CONDITION* is that these precautions not be executed with forbidden or abominable things, such as in exceeding the three times in performing one's purification; the fourth time is prohibited in order that the process not be prolonged while Muslims are waiting for him, for this is not fitting.<sup>319</sup> Nor (is it fitting) to use an excessive amount of water, or to delay a prayer after the beginning of its time, or to be the imam<sup>320</sup> and keep the congregation waiting, or to promise a Muslim something and then delay in fulfilling it, or because it is the time for him to engage in business and (not doing so) will cause loss to his family—all such things are unlawful, because these precautions are not obligatory—or to spread a prayer rug on the floor of the mosque so that no one may touch his clothing.<sup>321</sup> In this (last) there are three abominations: first, he has occupied a part of the mosque of the Muslims, whereas he has a right to no more space than he needs for himself;

<sup>318</sup> Cleansing oneself with stones in the absence of water is permissible, but should be repeated with water whenever it is available.

<sup>319</sup> When performing the obligatory ablutions for prayer (*wudū'*), one washes the hands, mouth, face, etc. One washing is obligatory (*fard*), the usual Practice of the Prophet (*sunnah*) is three times. Ghazzali implies that washing in excess of this is ostentation and profligacy.

<sup>320</sup> "imām": the leader of a congregational formal prayer.

<sup>321</sup> By spreading prayer rug, he creates a space about himself to prevent physical contact with others.

second, the prayer line may be interrupted, whereas the Practice of the Prophet is that the congregation stand shoulder to shoulder; and third, he avoids the Muslims the way he would avoid dogs or some other pollution. This is not fitting. There are many abominations that ignorant ascetics commit by way of precaution, but they do not know it.

#### EXCURSUS: THE KINDS OF EXTERNAL PURIFICATION

Not that thou hast learned that external purification is separate from internal purification, and that internal purification of is of three kinds: first, the purification of the limbs of sins; second, the purification of the soul from bad characteristics; and third, the purification of the heart of all that there is save God; know that there are also three kinds of external purification:

*THE FIRST KIND* is the purification from unclean things. Know that all physical things that God Most High has created are clean except a drink that induces drunkenness—a little or a lot of it is a pollution. All animals are clean except the dog and the pig. All dead animals are unclean except for four: humans, fish, locusts, and everything in which blood does not flow such as flies, bees, scorpions, and worms which (accidentally) fall into food. Everything inside an animal that becomes transmuted or altered<sup>322</sup> is unclean, except that which engenders the animal, such as semen, the eggs of a fowl, and the silkworm. Everything that is not altered, such as sweat and tears, is clean.

Anything unclean invalidates formal prayers except five things for which there is leniency because of difficulties: first, an uncleanness which remains after cleaning oneself with three stones, on condition that it be restricted to its own place.<sup>323</sup> Second, mud on a roadway—even if one definitely sees an impurity in it, but in an amount that one cannot prevent—is excused, unless one should fall into it, or an animal should kick up filth upon one's clothing—this is rare and not excused. Third, filth which reaches footgear, in an amount that it is not possible to avoid, is excused; if one is to perform formal prayer while wearing the footgear, then one rubs the footgear in the earth.<sup>324</sup> Fourth, the blood of lice on thy clothing or the clothing of someone else that thou art wearing, whether a

<sup>322</sup> Everything that is altered, for example, by the digestive processes in the gut of an animal.

<sup>323</sup> When water is unavailable to clean oneself after bowel movements and urinating, stones may be used. Since this is not as efficient a method, it may happen that some impurity may remain. After using three stones for this purpose, the requirements are fulfilled, but in the event an impurity has fallen upon another place, such as the leg or thigh, this must be removed before performing the formal prayers.

<sup>324</sup> That is, to clean the footgear as much as is possible.

little or a lot, is excused, even if one has sweat on it. And fifth, blood which is secreted from small pimples or pustules, of which the human skin is not devoid, and in the same way, the light fluid that seeps out of such small sores, except in the case that they be large and of pus, resembling a boil, and (this) is rare. It must be washed away. If a trace of it remains after washing, we hope that it will be excused. However, if a person has been cupped or injured, the blood must be washed off. Then, if there is a trace of it (on his person) and some danger in its being washed, then he should (not pray at that time) and perform the make-up prayers (at some other time). This excuse is unusual.

#### EXCURSUS: [THE KINDS OF]<sup>325</sup> CLEAN AND UNCLEAN WATER

If water passes over something unclean one time, except for the filth of a dog, it is clean,<sup>326</sup> unless the impurity itself still remains. In that case, it must be washed until it disappears. If it has been washed and well-rubbed, but there still remains a stain or odor, (nonetheless) it is clean.

All water created by God is clean and cleansing,<sup>327</sup> except in the case of four kinds of water: first, water which has been used one time to remove an impurity resulting from defilement<sup>328</sup> is clean, but does not cleanse; second, that which has been used to remove some unclean filth is neither clean nor cleansing; third, that which is less than 250 *manns*<sup>329</sup> in quantity, but into which some impurity has fallen, even if its appearance is not altered, is unclean according to the school of Shafi'i (R); however, if the amount of water exceeds 250 *manns*, so long as it is not altered in appearance by some impurity falling into it, it is clean; fourth, the water is clean in which some clean substance can be observed, such as saffron, soap, or alkali ashes, thereby changing its taste, smell, or

<sup>325</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>326</sup> It should be remembered that Ghazzali is discussing the cleanliness and uncleanness of water from the point of view of its suitability for use in washing and bathing for prayer, reading the Quran, etc.; not from the point of view of modern ideas about sanitation or potability.

<sup>327</sup> "clean and cleansing": clean water does not create a state of impurity. Cleansing water is clean and can be used to ablutions, etc.

<sup>328</sup> "defilement" (*hadath*) means any act or event which causes one to lose the state of purity necessary for prayer, etc., such as urinating, bowel movements, or the emission of semen. The remedies for this are first washing. After the washing it would be necessary to perform an ablation, either the lesser (*wudū*) or the greater (*ghusl*), depending upon the cause, in order to perform prayer, read the Quran, etc.

<sup>329</sup> *mann*: various values are given for the weight of a *mann*. There are forty *sers* in a *mann*. Because the weight of a *ser* varies in different countries and periods, it is difficult to give an exact calculation. Ghazzali's *mann*, depending upon the weight of the *ser*, was probably between 40 and 84 lbs. (Steingass)

color; but it is not cleansing. However, if the change is slight, then it is (also) cleansing.

**THE SECOND KIND** is the purification from causes of defilement. In this, there are five matters to be learned: the rules of conduct concerning elimination,<sup>330</sup> cleansing after an easing of nature,<sup>331</sup> the lesser ablution,<sup>332</sup> the greater ablution and the dry ablution.<sup>333</sup>

**THE MANNER OF ELIMINATION.** One should be in a deserted place away from the eyes of others. If possible, it should be (done) behind a wall. The privates should not be uncovered prior to sitting. One should not face the sun or the moon. The direction of prayer should not be behind one, nor should one face the direction of prayer, unless there is a wall before him. In that case, it is lawful, but it is to be preferred to have the direction of prayer to one's left or right. One should not ease nature in a place where people assemble. One should not urinate standing in water and one should not defecate beneath a fruit-bearing tree. One should not defecate or urinate in any hole. One should not urinate against the wind or on hard earth to avoid being splattered. One should not urinate standing up except out of necessity. One should not urinate where people perform their ablutions or bathe. When sitting, one should incline to the left. When one enters the place of purification,<sup>334</sup> one should lead with the left foot; when one comes out, one should lead with the right foot. (While there), one should not possess anything with the name of God written upon it. One should not go bareheaded to the toilet. When one enters, one should say: *I seek refuge with God from the noxious, impure filth of the sender of evil, the accursed Satan;* and when coming out, one should say: *Praise be to God Who has taken away from me that which troubles me and leaves with me that which benefits me.*

**THE MANNER OF CLEANSING ONESELF.** One must have at hand three stones or clods of earth before elimination. When one finishes, one should take one in the left hand and place it on a place (of the body) where there are no excreta and then move it to the place of impurity. One should rub it in around in such a way in order to remove the excreta and not spread it. If, after the use of three stones, the area is not clean, one should use two more, so that it will be an odd number. Then, one should take a larger stone with the right hand and the penis with the left hand and touch the stone with the penis three times, or touch the penis on a

<sup>330</sup> "elimination" (*qadā-yi hājat*) here means "the elimination of bodily wastes."

<sup>331</sup> "cleansing after an easing of nature": *istinjā.*

<sup>332</sup> "lesser ablution": *wudū.*

<sup>333</sup> "dry ablution": *tayammum.*

<sup>334</sup> "the place of purification" (*tahārat-jāy*): a euphemism for toilet.

wall in three places. One should use the left hand to move it, not the right hand. If one is content with that, it is enough. However, it is to be preferred that one combine the stones and water.

If one is to use water, one should rise from that place and go to another place so that the water does not drip on it. One should pour water with the right hand and rub with the left hand until one knows from the palm of the hand that nothing remains. Knowing that it is now clean, one should not use a lot of water or (use it) forcefully so that the water may go inside. Rather, when performing the cleansing, one should allow oneself to relax. Whatever is not reached by the water with this much is from inside and the rule of impurity does not apply to that lest one give way to anxiety (about this).

The same is true of the cleansing (of the penis) after urination. One should bring the hand down under the penis three times and shake it three times, walk back three steps, and cough three times. One should not trouble oneself more than this, lest anxiety assail one. If one has performed this (cleansing), whenever one supposes that some wetness has appeared after cleansing oneself after elimination, one should throw some water on one's underdrawers and say to himself that that wetness was from water; the Messenger (S) commanded this because of anxious promptings.

When completing the cleansing after elimination, one should wipe the hands on a wall or the ground. Then one should wash them until no odor remains. At the time of cleansing after elimination, one should say: *O God, purify my heart of hypocrisy and protect my privates from vile deeds.*

**THE MANNER OF THE LESSER ABLUTION.** After completing the cleansing, one should use a toothbrush.<sup>335</sup> One should start from the right and above, then (brush) to the left and below. Then (one should brush) the inside surfaces of the teeth in the same order. After that, one should also brush the tongue and the palate. One should know that using a toothbrush is important. In the Traditions, it is said: "One formal prayer having used a toothbrush is the equal of seventy prayers without having used one." One should state an Intention when brushing: "I clean the guardians<sup>336</sup> of the remembrance of God."

Just as after elimination one does not omit performing the lesser ablution, which was the Practice of the Messenger (S), one should never perform the lesser ablution without using a toothbrush. If one is not performing the lesser ablution, but knows that there has been some change in one's mouth—for reason of sleep, or keeping the mouth closed

<sup>335</sup> "toothbrush": The Arabic (and Persian) is *miswāk*, a kind of toothbrush made from the twig of certain trees.

<sup>336</sup> That is, the teeth, as they are involved in the articulation of the remembrance of God.

for a long time, or eating something with a strong odor—it is the Practice of the Prophet to brush one's teeth.

When finished with that, one sits upon and elevated place facing the direction of prayer and says: *In the name of God the, the Merciful, the Compassionate, I see refuge with Thee from the goadings of the devils and I seek refuge with Thee, my Lord, from their being present (with me).* (Q. 23:97-98) Then, one should wash one's hands three times and say: *O God, I beseech Thee for prosperity and blessing, and I seek refuge with Thee from misfortune and destruction.* Then, one recites the intention for the lawfulness<sup>337</sup> of formal prayer, or the intention for the removal of impurity, delaying the declaration of intention until the time of washing the mouth three times. Then one throws water into the mouth, unless one is fasting, and one says: *O God, help me to remember Thee and thank Thee and to read Thy Book.* Then one sniffs water into the nostrils three times and says: *O God, let me smell the perfume of the Garden and be satisfied with me.*

Next, one washes one's face three times and says: *O God, brighten my face with Thy light on the day Thou shalt brighten the faces of Thy saints.* Water should touch every hair that is on it to its root, except the hairs of a beard and mustache<sup>338</sup> that are very thick and dense. One should pass water over the beard and mustache and run the (wet) fingers through the hair. This is called "combing." Whatever is on the sides of the face from the top of the ear to the temples is the limit of the face. One should insert the finger into the corner of the eyes to remove whatever is in the corner of the eye of collyrium<sup>339</sup> and the like.

After that, one washes the right arm three times up to the middle of the upper arm—as close as possible to under the upper arm is preferred—and says: *O God, give me my book (of deeds) in my right hand and make my reckoning easy.* Then one does the same with the left hand and moves rings so that water goes under them, and says: *O God, truly I see refuge with Thee (against) Thy giving me my book in my left hand or from behind my back.*

Then one wets both hands and places the spread fingertips together and brings them over the head from the front of the scalp to the nape of the neck, then back again to the starting point so that both surfaces of the hair are moistened; this is once. One does this three times so that all of the head is wiped, and says: *O God, cover me with The mercy and send down of Thy blessings upon me and shade me beneath Thy Throne on the day when nothing will shade me save Thy shadow.* Then one wipes the ears thrice, inserting the fingers into the cavities of

<sup>337</sup> "lawfulness" (*istibāhat*): literally, deeming something permissible.

<sup>338</sup> "beard and mustache": *mahāsin* (good things), so called because they adorn the male face.

<sup>339</sup> "collyrium": *kuhl*.

the ears and bringing the thumbs down behind the ears, and says: *O God, make me one of those who listen to the Word and follow the best of it.* Then one wipes the all of the neck and says: *O God, free my neck from the fire and I seek refuge with Thee from the chains and fetters.*

Then one washes the right foot three times to the middle of the calf and runs the fingers with the little finger of the left hand under (the foot), beginning with the little toes of the right foot and ending with the little toe of the left foot, and says *O God, make my feet firm on the Bridge on the day when feet slip from it.* One washes the left foot in the same way and says: *O God, I seek refuge with Thee lest my foot slip on the Bridge on the day the feet of the hypocrites will slip.*

After completing (these things), one says: *I testify that there is no god but God, the One; He has no partner; and I testify that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger. O God, make me one of the repenters and make me one of the purified and made me one of Thy righteous servants.*

One who does not know Arabic should be instructed in the meaning of these words, so that he may know what he is saying. In the Traditions, it is related that when anyone in a state of purity remembers God Most High, all of his parts become purified from the sins and the errors he has committed. If he does not mention God, nothing is purified except that which was touched by water.

One should perform the ablutions before each formal prayer, even if nothing has occurred to cause one to lose the state of purity, for it is related in the Traditions: "Whoever renews his purity, God Most High renews his faith for him." When one has purified oneself correctly, one must know that one has cleansed that which is seen by the people, but that which God Most High sees is the soul. When one has not cleansed it with the repentance of disagreeable traits, one is like the person who will host the king and cleans the outer door but leaves dirty the court and the dais where the king will sit.

#### EXCURSUS: SIX THINGS DISLIKED IN THE LESSER ABLUTION

Know that in the lesser ablution six things are disliked: talking, striking the face with the hands,<sup>340</sup> shaking the wet hands (so that water scatters from them), performing the ablution with water which has been warmed in a water pot, wasting water, and performing the acts more than three times each.

However, drying the face with the intention to prevent dirt from settling on it or not doing that so that more of the traces of worship

<sup>340</sup> In the corresponding Arabic passage in *The Revival*, Ghazzali says: "and striking the face a striking with water"; that is, splashing the face with water rather than washing it carefully.

remain upon it have both been reported and both are permissible when that is the intention, and both have merit. It is preferred that one use an earthen vessel when purifying oneself, for it is more humble than a (metallic) ewer or bowl.

**THE MANNER OF THE GREATER ABLUTION.** Whoever has sexual intercourse or a discharge of semen, either asleep or awake, must perform the greater ablution. It is one's obligation to wash the entire body and that the water reach the roots of the hair, and that one declare the intention to remove the state of impurity.<sup>341</sup>

The Practice of the Prophet is that one first utters: *In the name of God*. Then, one washes the hands thrice after which one washes clean all impurities from the body. Next, one performs the lesser ablution as described above, with all of the Practices of the Prophet—one should delay in washing the feet until the last when one is leaving the bath.<sup>342</sup> So, one should throw water<sup>343</sup> on the right side (of the body) three times and on the left side three times. One should rub every place the hands can reach. One should try to wash any spots of the body that are (pressed) together,<sup>344</sup> as this is a religious obligation. One should refrain from handling the genitalia.

**THE MANNER OF THE DRY ABLUTION.** Know that whoever cannot obtain water, or does not have a sufficient quantity for himself and his comrades to drink, or the way to the water is obstructed by a wild beast, or there is a person there that one fears, or—if the water is someone else's property—that person will not sell it except at an exorbitant price, or one has a wound which water might affect and endanger one's life or prolong illness; (such a person) must wait until the time of the obligatory prayer, then look for a place where the earth is clean. Then, he strikes the earth with his two hands so that the dust rises and with his fingers together. Then he recites the intention of

<sup>341</sup> "state of impurity": *janābat*.

<sup>342</sup> Ghazzali mentions this because washing the feet is the last part of the lesser ablution; however, in the greater ablution washing the body completely intervenes before the washing of the feet. It is assumed that the person bathing is in a standing position. See following Note.

<sup>343</sup> It should be noted that Ghazzali is not describing a bath using tub or shower. The water is dipped out of some container and thrown over the body, a practice of bathing still prevalent in many parts of the world. In doing this, naturally the feet would be the last parts of the body to be washed before putting on clogs or footgear and leaving the bathing place.

<sup>344</sup> That is, places where parts of the body fold over each other, such as behind the ears, the armpits, the groin, behind the knees, between the toes, etc. Every external surface of the body should be washed.

permission.<sup>345</sup> Then, he wipes all of his face with both hands, not taking pains lest the dust enter into the hair.

Then, he removes his rings and strikes the earth again with his hands, fingers spread apart. Then, he places the back of the fingers of his right hand on the bottom of the fingers of his left hand. Then, he puts the fingers of his left hand on his right forearm. Then, he rubs the palm of the left hand on the left forearm. Then, he rubs the left thumb over the right thumb. Then, he does the same to the left hand with the right hand. Then, he rubs both palms together. Then, he rubs the fingers between each other. If this is done in one stroke, it is sufficient. If one cannot do this, it is permissible to do more so that the dust may reach all parts of the hand. With such a dry ablution, one may perform the obligatory prayer and as many voluntary prayers as one wishes. However, to perform another obligatory prayer, one must perform another dry ablution.

THE THIRD KIND is the purification from bodily dirt. This is of two types:

*THE FIRST TYPE* is dirt such as that which is found among the hairs of the head, beard, or mustache. It must be gotten rid of with a comb, water, and the clay of the bathhouse.<sup>346</sup> The Messenger (S) never parted with his comb, either on a journey or at home. It is a Practice of the Prophet to keep oneself clean of such dirt. Another is the dirt that accumulates in the corner of the eye. One should remove it when performing the lesser ablution. Another is in the ear. When one emerges from the bath one should take care of this. Also, there is that which is in the nose and the plaque on the teeth. They can be removed by brushing with a toothbrush, rinsing, and sniffing. Too, that which accumulates on the knuckles or the back of the foot and heel and that which is under the nails, or any other dirt on the body (should be removed). Getting rid of all such things is the Practice of the Prophet.

Know that if such dirt remains, purification is not nullified; the dirt does not impede the water from the skin, except if there is a lot under the fingernails, an abnormal amount. In that case, it is an impediment. Cleansing oneself from such dirt with hot water and clay in the bath is a Practice of the Prophet.

<sup>345</sup> "permission": *istibāhat*: see Note 337 above.

<sup>346</sup> This clay, *gil-i garmābah*, is a special preparation of clay used for washing in bathhouses.

## EXCURSUS: CONDUCT IN THE BATHHOUSE

Whoever enters a bathhouse four things are obligatory,<sup>347</sup> and there are ten Practices of the Prophet:

*TWO OF THE OBLIGATIONS* concern the private parts: (1) One should cover the (male) body from the navel to the knee from the sight (of others). (2) One should watch the hand of the servant, for handling is a greater impropriety<sup>348</sup> than seeing. And two concern the private parts of others: (3) One should refrain from looking at the private parts of others. If someone uncovers his privates, one should caution him. There is no fear, for, if one does not, one is in rebellion (against God), and whoever does not do this leaves the bath in a state of rebellion. A story about this is told of ‘Umar (R): One day he was sitting in the bath. He was facing the wall with something bound about his eyes.<sup>349</sup> This is also incumbent upon women. (4) Eating bread in the bathhouse is prohibited, except for some manifest reason.

*AS FOR THE PRACTICES OF THE PROPHET*, they are: (1) reciting an intention that “I do this so that I will be adorned for prayer, not for the eyes of people.” (2) One should pay the bathhousekeeper in advance so that he may be pleased with one’s pouring out of water and know what he is being given. (3) Then, one should enter with the left foot and one should say upon entering: *In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate; I seek refuge with God from the noxious, impure filth of the sender of evil, the accursed Satan.* This is because the bath is the place of Satan. (4) Then, one should endeavor to go at a time when the bathhouse is empty or at a time when it is relatively empty. (5) One should not enter the caldarium<sup>350</sup> hurriedly to sweat a lot. (6) Upon entering, one should wash both hands immediately. One should not waste water; one should use a quantity that will not displease the bathhousekeeper. (7) Upon entering, one should not greet with “Peace” (*salām*), but if some one grasps thy hand,<sup>351</sup> one should not be concerned. If some one greets him, he should reply: *May God safeguard thee*, but should not speak much. (8) If one recites the Quran, one should do so softly and not raise one’s voice. But if one utters the “seeking refuge”,<sup>352</sup> it may be done in a loud voice. (9) One should not enter the bathhouse at the time of the sunset obligatory formal prayer and when the sun is going down. One should not go to the bathhouse between the time of the sunset obligatory formal prayer and the obligatory formal

<sup>347</sup> “obligatory”: *wājib*.

<sup>348</sup> “a greater impropriety” (*farā-tar*): literally, “higher, farther up”

<sup>349</sup> So as not to see the privates of others.

<sup>350</sup> caldarium (*khānah-yi garm*): The hot or steam room of a bathhouse.

<sup>351</sup> That is, shakes your hand or grasps them in both hands as a sign of friendship.

<sup>352</sup> “seeking refuge” (*isti‘ādhah*): that is, *I seek refuge with God from the accursed Satan*.

prayer before going to sleep, for that is the time of the circulating of Satan. (10) When entering the caldarium, remember the fires of hell. One should remain there an hour or more to know what the prison of hell will be like.

Indeed, if one is intelligent, when looking at anything, one remembers the Hereafter. When one sees darkness, one sees the gloom of the grave. When one sees a snake, one remembers the snakes of hell. When one sees something dreadful, one remembers Munkar and Nakir<sup>353</sup> and the guardians of hell. When one hears a harsh sound, one remembers the blast of the Trumpet (announcing the Day of Judgment). When one sees rejection and acceptance in some business, one is reminded of the rejection and acceptance of the Hereafter. These are the lawful Practices of the Prophet.

From the medical point of view, it is said that employing lime once a month is beneficial. When one is about to leave, throwing cold water on the feet prevents gout and headaches. One should not pour cold water on the head. When leaving the bathhouse in summer, one should sleep; that is better for one than a medicinal draught.

*THE SECOND TYPE* is of a different kind. It is the cleanliness from the refuse of the body. There are seven of these:

First: The hair on the head. Shaving (the head) is preferred and cleaner, except for nobles.<sup>354</sup> However, partial shaving and leaving hair in different places, as is the custom of soldiers, is disliked and has been interdicted.

Second: Keeping the mustache level with the (line of the upper) lip is a Practice of the Prophet. Letting it lengthen to below that line is interdicted.

Third: Plucking out of he hair in the armpits every forty days is a Practice of the Prophet. If one becomes accustomed to this in the beginning, it is easy; if one is not accustomed to this, shaving is preferred so as not to give oneself trouble.

Fourth: It is a Practice of the Prophet to remove the pubic hair with lime or by shaving. This should be done at least once every forty days.

Fifth: It is cutting the nails so that dirt does not accumulate under them. However, if there is dirt under them, purification is not invalidated, since the Messenger (S), having seen such dirt on the hands of some

<sup>353</sup> Munkar and Nakir: the two angels (their names mean "Unknown" and "Repudiating") who visit the dead in their graves and interrogate them about their belief in the Prophet and Islam.

<sup>354</sup> This is a sanitary recommendation. The "nobles," being more affluent, presumably had access to better sanitary facilities.

people, ordered them to cut their nails, but not to make up their prayers. In the traditions, it is recorded that when the nails become long, they become the residence of the devil. One should begin with the superior nails, and the hand is superior to the foot, and from the right to the left. The finger that is extended (when reciting) the "Testimony" is superior to the others. That is the index finger of the right hand, so it is to be preferred to begin with that one. Then from the right side until the left side is reached. Place the hands upon each other so that they form a circle and then begin with the index finger of the right hand. One proceeds to the right little finger; then start with the little finger of the left hand and finish with the thumb of the right hand.

Sixth: It is cutting back the umbilical cord, and that is done at the time of birth.

Seventh: It is the circumcision of males and females.

#### **EXCURSUS: THE ETIQUETTE OF THE BEARD AND MUSTACHE**

It is customary to let male facial hair grow to the length of a fist and then cut it so that it does not become excessive. Ibn 'Umar<sup>355</sup> (R) and a party of the Followers<sup>356</sup> did thus. Another party said that it should be left longer. Know that ten things are disliked concerning the facial hair:

First: Dyeing the hair black. In the Traditions, it is related that this is the dyeing of the inhabitants of hell and the dyeing of the unbelievers. The first person to do this was Pharaoh. Ibn 'Abbas (R)<sup>357</sup> relates that the Messenger (S) said: "During the Last Days there will be a people who blacken their hair; they shall not smell the perfume of heaven." And also in the Traditions it is related: "The worst of the elderly are those who make themselves like the young, and the best of the young are those who make themselves like the elders." The reason for this prohibition is that it is a disguise with corrupt motives.

Second: Dyeing the hair red or yellow. However, it is (acceptable to) the Practice of the Prophet (as a stratagem) if warriors fighting for Islam do this so that the unfaithful will not be spurred to fight hard and look upon them as weak and old.

Third: Whitening the facial hair with sulfur so that others will think one is old and give him more respect. This is foolishness, for

<sup>355</sup> Ibn 'Umar: 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khattab, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman, the popular son of the second of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, 'Umar bin al-Khattab (see Note 299). He was noted for his generosity and died at Makkah AH73/692CE at the age of 84.

<sup>356</sup> "the Followers" (*tābi'īyān*): the generation that followed after the generation of the Companions, who were contemporaries of the Prophet (S).

<sup>357</sup> Ibn 'Abbas: 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas bin 'Abd al-Muttalib, one of the most important of the Companions. He studied with 'Ali bin Abi Talib and was expelled from Makkah by 'Abdullah bin Zubayr. He repaired to Ta'if where he died in AH68/687-8CE.

respect comes with knowledge and intelligence, not with age or youth. Anas Malik (R)<sup>358</sup> says that when the Messenger of God (S) received the command and departed,<sup>359</sup> there were not twenty white hairs in all of his hair.

Fourth: Removing (by cutting or plucking) white hairs from the facial hair and being ashamed of old age. This is as though one were ashamed of the light that God Most High gave him. This is ignorance.

Fifth: Plucking the hair at the onset of youth out of fancy or pride so that the face may appear hairless. This is ignorance, for God Most High has angels whose recited praying<sup>360</sup> is this which they say: *Praise be to Him who has adorned men with beards and women with tresses.*

Sixth: Dressing the facial hair with the fingernails like a pigeon's tail so that it may appear better to women and so they like him more.

Seven: Letting the hair on the head grow long with locks that fall below the earlobes, more than is approved by the righteous.

Eighth: Admiring the blackness or whiteness of one's hair, for God Most High does not like those who are conceited.

Ninth: Combing one's hair for people to see, not for observing the Practice of the Prophet.

Tenth: Leaving it in disarray in order to pretend to asceticism so that people may suppose that he does not take the trouble to comb his own hair himself.

Let this suffice concerning the rules of the purification of the body.

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<sup>358</sup> Anas Malik: Anas bin Malik. Abu Hamzah al-Ansari. The "al-Ansari" indicates that he was one of the Helpers from Madinah who gave aid to the Muslims fleeing Makkah in Hijrah. He was the Prophet's servant, a soldier, and an important source of Traditions. He died at Basrah in AH93/711CE.

<sup>359</sup> That is, he died.

<sup>360</sup> "recited praying": *tasbih*.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCERNING FORMAL PRAYER

Know that (obligatory) formal prayer is a pillar of Islam and the foundation of religion. It is the forerunner and master of all acts of worship. A compact is made by whoever performs these five obligations according to their conditions and at their (proper) times with God Most High that he will be in His security and protection. If he has abstained from committing any major sins, all of his other sins will be erased. The five prayers are the atonement for all of them. The Messenger (S) said: "The similitude of these five obligatory prayers is a clear channel of water which flows by the door of a person's house. Everyday he washes himself five times in that water. Is it possible that dirt would remain on him?" They said: "No, O Messenger of God." He said: "These five prayers carry away sins the way the water carries away dirt."

The Messenger (S) also said: "Formal prayer is a pillar of religion. Whoever refrains from it has destroyed his own religion." They asked (the Messenger): "What is the best of deeds?" He replied: "Performing one's (obligatory) formal prayers at their (proper) times." And he said: "The key to heaven is formal prayer." And he said: "God Most High has not imposed upon His servant anything—except His Unity—more pleasing to Him than (obligatory) prayer. If there were anything more pleasing than this, the angels would have occupied themselves with it as they do with prayer. One group is bowing, another group is prostrating, another group is standing, and another group is sitting."<sup>361</sup> And he said: "Whoever deliberately omits one obligatory formal prayer is an unbeliever." That is, it is close to being a fault in his belief itself, as they say: "Whoever has lost his water in the desert has lost his life." That is, he has reached (a place) close to (his) destruction and has fallen into (mortal) danger. And he said: "The first thing that is examined on the Day of Resurrection is (a person's record of) formal prayer. If it is complete and according to rule, it is accepted; then according to that his other deeds are accepted as they are; but if (the record of formal prayer) is deficient, then he is driven away despite all of his other works.

And the Messenger (S) said: "The formal prayer of whoever purifies himself well and performs them at the proper times, and bows and prostrates himself properly, and whose soul is humble and modest, goes to the Throne white and shining and says: 'May God Most High watch over thee as thou hast watched over me.' And the formal prayers of whoever does not perform his obligatory formal prayers at the correct time, is lax in his purification, and careless in his bowing and prostrating,

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<sup>361</sup> That is, the angels are in the principle physical postures of the formal prayer.

and does not perform them in submission and humility, goes to heaven black and dark and says: ‘May God Most High make thee wasted, just as thou hast wasted me,’ so that God Most High wills that his formal prayer be wrapped about him like a ragged garment and that he be driven out.” And the Messenger (S) also said: “The worst of thieves is he who steals a formal prayer.”

### THE MANNER OF THE OUTWARD ASPECT OF FORMAL PRAYER<sup>362</sup>

Know that the outward aspect of prayer is like (its physical) body. It has a true nature and a secret that is the spirit (*rūh*) of formal prayer. We shall first expound the external aspect of formal prayer.

The first is that after the purification of the body and clothing and the covering of the privates, one stands on a clean place facing the direction of prayer. The feet should be placed the distance of four fingers apart.<sup>363</sup> The back should be straight and the head inclined forward. The eyes should be fixed on a spot not further away than the place of prostration.<sup>364</sup>

When standing erect, one should recite: *Say, I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind.* (Q. 114:1)<sup>365</sup> One should concentrate one’s thoughts on keeping the devil away from oneself.

**THE CALL TO ASSEMBLE FOR PRAYER, THE CALL TO ASSEMBLE IN RANKS FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF OBLIGATORY PRAYER, AND THE DECLARATION OF THE INTENTION.** Then, if there is someone who is possible for one to follow,<sup>366</sup> the call to assemble<sup>367</sup> is proclaimed loudly. If not, then one limits oneself to the call to assemble in ranks.<sup>368</sup> The Intention<sup>369</sup> is recited in one’s heart. One says to the heart, for example: ‘I perform the obligatory noon formal prayer for God Most High.’

<sup>362</sup> Although the following exposition of the procedure for the service of formal prayer applies to what is broadly correct for all Muslims, there are differences among the various schools of religious jurisprudence in the details. There are also some differences between men and women in the manner of performing the formal prayers.

<sup>363</sup> That is, the width of four fingers of the hand; the feet should be placed from about three and one-half to four and one-half inches apart.

<sup>364</sup> That is, where the face or forehead touches the ground or prayer rug during prostration.

<sup>365</sup> That is, one should recite the entire last surah of the Quran that begins thus: *I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer [the devil], who whispers in the hearts of mankind, of jinn and mankind.* (Q. 114:1-6)

<sup>366</sup> That is, if there is someone possessing the necessary qualifications to lead the prayer.

<sup>367</sup> “call to assemble”: *adhān*.

<sup>368</sup> “call to assemble in ranks”: *iqāmah*.

<sup>369</sup> “the Intention”: *nīyat*.

**THE MAGNIFICATION:**<sup>370</sup> When the meaning of those words has become present in the heart, one lifts one's hands to a point near the ears, so that the fingertips are level with the tops of the ears, the thumbs are level with the earlobes, and the palms in line (vertically) with his shoulders. When one has assumed this stance, one says: *God is Greater.*<sup>371</sup> Then, one places one's hands, one upon the other, above one's navel and below one's chest. The right hand is on top of the left hand. The finger of Testimony<sup>372</sup> and the middle finger are extended over the left forearm, while the other fingers are circles around the forearm. The hands should not drop down (to the sides after pronouncing the Magnification) and then be brought back towards the chest; rather, they should be placed on the chest (directly from the position by the ears), for that is more correct. Between the two positions, one should not move the hands about, neither forward nor to the sides.

One should not exaggerate in pronouncing the Magnification, so that the *u* after *Allāh* is noticeable or the *a* after the *b* in *akbar* sounds like broad ā.<sup>373</sup> Such things are the work of those influenced by devilish insinuations and the ignorant. Pronounce these words during formal prayer in the same way that thou wouldst pronounce them when speaking ordinarily outside of prayer, without ostentation and exaggeration.

**THE RECITATION:** When the hands are placed upon each other, one should say: *God is greater (than all) in greatness; praise be to God in plenitude; praise God in the morning and the evening.* Then one recites: *I have turned my face towards...*<sup>374</sup> Then one says: *Praise be to Thee, O God, and with Thy praise and may The name be blessed and Thy majesty exalted; there is no god other than Thee;* so that all schools (of religious jurisprudence) and all narratives (of Traditions) may be brought to together.<sup>375</sup> Then one says: *I seek refuge with God from the accursed*

<sup>370</sup> "Magnification": *Takbir*. The meaning is "God is Greater than all else."

<sup>371</sup> "God is Greater": *Allāhu Akbar*.

<sup>372</sup> "the finger of Testimony" (*angusht-i shahādat*): the right forefinger.

<sup>373</sup> That is, so that the second *a* in *akbar* sounds like the ā in 'father,' rather than having the correct short vowel which is more like the *a* in 'back.'

<sup>374</sup> *Wajjahtu wajhi*. Ghazzali's intention here is that one should recite the entire verse beginning with those words. It is: *Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the polytheists.* (Q. 6:79). The verse actually commences this way: *Innī wajjahtu wajhī...* It is recited when the one is standing in position for the performance of the formal prayer after the call to assemble (*iqāmah*) is completed, and immediately before the declaration of the Intention. The Intention ends with a Magnification (*takbir = allāhu akbar*) at which the hands are raised to the level of the ears, as Ghazzali has already described above in the section on the Magnification.

<sup>375</sup> That is, to harmonize all schools of religious law and various (sometimes conflicting) Traditions.

*Satan; verily God is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing and In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

**THE PRAISE AND THE CHAPTER:** After this one recites “The Praise,”<sup>376</sup> observing the prolongations of vowels and the doubled consonants.<sup>377</sup> One should not exaggerate in articulating the letters so that they become confused. Observe the difference between (the letters) *Dād* and *Zā*; however, if one cannot, it is acceptable.<sup>378</sup> When completing the recitation (of this chapter), one should say ‘Amen’ (*āmīn*), not as though it is the last word of the chapter, but a little separate from it. Then another chapter is recited or whatever one wishes of the Quran. In the first two bows of the dawn, sunset, and evening prayers, they are to be recited aloud, except when one is following an imam.<sup>379</sup>

**THE BOW:** After pronouncing a Magnification, one bows,<sup>380</sup> but not immediately upon finishing the recitation of the Quranic verses. One raises one’s hands during this Magnification as before. One prolongs the Magnification until one reaches the end of the bow and then one’s hands are placed on the knees. The fingers, spread apart, are in line with the direction of prayer. The hands are not removed from the knees; rather, one keeps them straight. One’s back and head are straight, like a plank, so that one’s entire figure is like the letter *Lām*.<sup>381</sup> The elbows extend

<sup>376</sup> The Praise (*al-Ḥamdu lillāh*): Familiar quotations from the Holy Quran are often referred to by their first prominent word or phrase. In this case, “the praise” is the first word of the second verse of the first chapter of the Quran, more often referred to these days as “The Opening” (*al-Fātiḥah*). When performing the formal prayers, one first recites this chapter and then follows it with another chapter or some verses from another chapter of the Quran. At a minimum, any Muslim who performs the five daily prayers recites this chapter of seven verses 17 times a day.

<sup>377</sup> Persian pronunciation, like English, normally does not double consonants (we say “little,” not “lit-tle”). In borrowed words from languages where doubled-consonants often have meaning differences—and Arabic is one such language. Persian speakers ignore them in ordinary conversation but often pronounce them in careful, formal speech. In Arabic, for example *dabara* means “he turned his back; it elapsed,” but *dabbara* means “he planned, made arrangements, managed, etc.” Not pronouncing the doubled *b* would drastically alter the meaning.

<sup>378</sup> Ghazzali is referring to two of the so-called “Arabic letters” which have no equivalent in Persian pronunciation or most other languages. Indeed, Arabic is called the “language of *Dād*,” supposedly because no other language in the world possesses such a sound.

<sup>379</sup> When an imam is leading the prayer, only his voice is heard in these recitations.

<sup>380</sup> The act of bowing is called *rūkū’*. Each bow is called a *rak’at*. Formal prayers are, in part, identified by the number of bows they contain.

<sup>381</sup> “the letter *lām*”: the letter L. The similitude is apposite in English as well, because the L has a similar shape in both scripts: that is, a longer vertical and shorter horizontal stroke at the base of the vertical. The Arabic *lām* faces to the left, while the Latin L faces to the right. The Arabic has a greater or smaller curve at the junction, but the Latin L usually has a right angle.

beyond one's sides and the upper arms do not touch the sides. However, a woman keeps her upper arms against her sides.<sup>382</sup> While remaining in this position, one says three times: *Glory be to my Lord, the Mighty, and with His praise.* If there is no imam, it is better that one say this seven or ten times

Then one straightens up from the bow and—without folding the hands—one says: *God listens to those who praise Him.* Then one rests while standing and says: *Our Lord! All praise is Thine in the fullness of the heavens and in the fullness of the earth and in the fullness of all other things that Thou may wish.*

In the second bow of the dawn prayer, it is a requirement to recite the “Declaration of Obedience to the Will of God.”<sup>383</sup>

**THE PROSTRATION:** Then, one pronounces a Magnification and prostrates oneself,<sup>384</sup> so that everything touches the earth to make one as near to it as possible: first the knees, then the hands, then the forehead and the nose. The hands are placed on the ground in line with the ears, the fingers together. The forearms lie on the ground, but there is a space between the upper arms and the sides, and (between) the belly and the thighs. Women bring these parts together.

Then, one says three times: *Glory be to my Lord, the Highest, and with His praise.* If one is not following an imam, it is better to increase the number. Then, one pronounces the Magnification and rises from the prostration and sits back on one's left leg, placing the hands on the thighs, and says: *Lord! Forgive me and have mercy upon me; provide for me and guide me; reward me, protect me, and excuse me.* Then, one performs another prostration. After that, one sits back, but lightly, and pronounces the Magnification. Then, one stands and performs the next

<sup>382</sup> One of the few occasions when Ghazzali points out different rules for the two sexes. It may be pointed out that in the Medieval world few women anywhere were able to read. Books were normally written with the male reader in mind. (Not many males could read either, although in the Islamic world, the literacy rate of both sexes was considerably higher than in the West of that era because of the great emphasis Islam placed upon learning to read the Quran.)

<sup>383</sup> According to Shafi'i and others. Abu Hanifah did not require this. There are different forms of this (the *Qunūt*) prayer. The most common version is: *O God, guide me among those whom Thou hast guided, and preserve me among those whom Thou has preserved, and befriend me among those whom Thou hast befriended, and bless me in what Thou hast granted and save me from the evil of what Thou hast ordered, for Thou dost order and no order is given contrary to Thine order. Surely, he is not disgraced whom Thou befriendest, blessed art Thou, our Lord, and highly exalted!*

<sup>384</sup> The act of prostration is called *sujūd*. Each individual prostration is a *sajdah*.

bow in the manner of the first, saying: *I seek refuge with God before reciting the Praise.*<sup>385</sup>

**THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH:** Now, when one has finished the second bow, one sits for the Testimony—sitting upon the left leg, as between the two prostrations with the hands on the thighs, but here the fingers of the right hand are curled, except the finger of Testimony<sup>386</sup> which is omitted.<sup>387</sup> At the time of reciting the Testimony, it is extended at the point when one says *illālāh (except God)*, not when one says *lā ilāha (There is no god)*. It is permissible for the thumb to be omitted also. The second Testimony is performed in the same manner, however both legs are out from under to the right. The left buttock is on the ground.<sup>388</sup>

In the first Testimony, one rises after saying: *O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad*, but in the second Testimony, one continues to the end of the well-known prayer.<sup>389</sup> Then one says: *Peace be upon you and the mercy of God*, turning the head to the right so that someone looking from behind him sees his face in profile. Then one pronounces the second “Peace” to the left in the same way. With these two greetings, he makes his Intention of leaving the prayer and the Intention of the greeting those present and the angels.<sup>390</sup>

**EXCURSUS: SOME DISAGREEABLE ACTIONS DURING FORMAL PRAYER:** Beginning a prayer when one is hungry, thirsty, angry, feels the need to urinate or defecate, or with any mental preoccupation which prevents humility; extending the legs close together; raising one leg; sitting on the ankles during the prostration; sitting on both buttocks; bringing the knees to the chest; inserting the hands inside clothing; holding clothing when prostrating; tightening the underdrawers, releasing the hands; looking from side to side; cracking the knuckles; scratching

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<sup>385</sup> “the Praise”: that is, the first chapter of the Quran, more formally called “The Opening” (*al-Fatiḥah*). The recitation of the Opening precedes the recitation from another part of the Quran in the standing that precedes each bow of the formal prayer.

<sup>386</sup> See Note 372 above.

<sup>387</sup> That is, not curled.

<sup>388</sup> The right buttock is on the left leg.

<sup>389</sup> That is, *O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad as Thou didst bless Abraham and the people of Abraham; surely Thou art Praised, Majestic. O God, give blessings to Muhammad and the people of Muhammad as Thou didst give blessings to Abraham and the people of Abraham; surely Thou art Praised, Majestic.*

<sup>390</sup> This greeting is addressed to “you” (plural), even though one is alone, or only one other person is present. This is because the appointed angels are always present and they share in this greeting. This is also the reason for the common use of the plural in this greeting when meeting or taking leave from someone; that is, even if only one person is being greeted, the greeting is usually in the plural to include the angels. It may also be pointed out that Arabic has three numbers: singular, dual, and plural.

the body; yawning; playing with the hair of the mustache or beard; smoothing the ground just before prostration; blowing on the ground at the time of prostration; interlocking the fingers; and leaning back against something.

In summary, the eyes, hands, and all body parts must be according to the rules of etiquette and the nature of formal prayer in order for the prayer to be fulfilled and fit to be a provision for the Hereafter.

However, of all that has been said above, the religious obligations are no more than twelve things: the first Magnification, the standing, the recitation of "The Opening," the bow and the resting during it, the standing erect from the bow, the prostration and the resting during it, the raising of the body from the prostration, the sitting for the last Testimony, the blessing upon the Messenger, the sitting during that, and the salutation.

Doing this much makes a valid prayer, with the meaning that the sword will spare him;<sup>391</sup> however, the acceptance of the prayer is not certain.<sup>392</sup> It is as though a slave girl without ears, nose, hands and feet were sent to a king; she is alive, but it is by no means certain that she will be an acceptable gift.

### **DISCLOSING THE TRUE NATURE AND SPIRIT OF FORMAL PRAYER**

Know that what we have said above was about the body and outward aspect of formal prayer. This form has a true nature, which is its spirit (*rūh*). And know that for every act of the acts of prayer and for every phrase of its phrases there is another—unique—spirit. Without the real spirit, it is as though the formal prayer were a dead person, a body without life. If the basis is present, but the actions and rules are not observed fully, it is like a blind person with his ears and nose cut off. If the actions are there, but the spirit and true nature are not in them, it is as though it has eyes, but not the power of sight, and has ears, but not the power of hearing.

The basis of the spirit of formal prayer is humility and the presence of the soul during the entire formal prayer; for the purpose of formal prayer is to direct the soul to God Most High and the renewal of the remembrance (of God) through awe and glorification. As God Most High said: *Establish worship for My remembrance.* (Q. 20:14) And the Messenger (S) said: "There are many who get nothing from formal prayer other than trouble and fatigue. This is because they are performing the formal prayer with their bodies and neglecting (the participation of)

<sup>391</sup> That is, that he is a Muslim and killing him is not lawful.

<sup>392</sup> That is, it is not certain that the prayer will be acceptable to God.

their souls." He also said: "There are many who pray; but, of their prayers, only a sixth or a tenth is recorded. The amount recorded is the part of each person's prayer in which his soul is present." And he said: "Pray each prayer as though thou wert saying farewell to some one"; that is, as though thou wert saying farewell to thine own passions with this prayer; rather, as though thou wert saying goodbye to everything other than God Most High and devoting thyself entirely to the formal prayer. This is why 'Ayishah<sup>393</sup> (R) used to say: "The Messenger (S) used to talk with us and we with him. When it was time for the obligatory formal prayer, he would say: 'We have never known each other and ye have never known me'; this was from the devotion he had to God Most High." And the Messenger (S) said: "God Most High does not look at the formal prayer of him whose soul is not in his prayer."

When Abraham the Friend (of God)<sup>394</sup> (A) used to pray, the agitation of his soul could be heard at a distance of two miles. When 'Ali (R)<sup>395</sup> desired to perform his prayers, he trembled and the color of his face changed. He would say: "The time has come for the trust<sup>396</sup> which the seven heavens and the earth could not bear when it was shown to them."

Sufyan Thawri<sup>397</sup> (R) says: "Every prayer in which my soul is not present is not a correct prayer." Hasan of Basrah<sup>398</sup> used to say: "Every prayer in which the soul is not present is closer to punishment." Mu'adh (bin) Jabal<sup>399</sup> (R) says: "Whoever looks purposely to the right or left to see who is standing there has not prayer."

<sup>393</sup> 'Ayishah: the daughter of the Abu Bakr, the first caliph, and a favorite wife of the Prophet. She survived the Prophet by many years, dying in Madinah at the age of 67 in AH 58/678. Many Traditions are related on her authority.

<sup>394</sup> Abraham: in Arabic and the Islamic world he is known as *Ibrāhim* with the epithet "the friend of God" (*khalil-ullāh*).

<sup>395</sup> 'Ali: the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. He married the Prophet's daughter Fatimah. He became the fourth caliph and was assassinated in AH 40/661CE. A man of immense personal integrity and incorruptible faith, the dispute over his accession to the caliphate led to the schism between the Sunnis and the Shiahs.

<sup>396</sup> "the trust" (*al-amānah*), a reference to Quranic verse: *Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. Lo, he hath proved a tyrant and a fool!* Q. 33:72)

<sup>397</sup> Sufyan Thawri: Sufyan bin Sa'id bin Masruq, Abu 'Abdullah al-Thawri. A noted ascetic, he was also a well-known scholar, especially with regard to Tradition and the Law. He lived from about AH97/715CE to AH163/778CE. He died in Basrah.

<sup>398</sup> Hasan of Basrah (Hasan al-Baṣrī): Abu Sa'id al-Hasan bin Yasar (AH23/642CE to AH110/728CE). Born in Madinah, his mother was a slave of one of the wives of the Prophet. He became the secretary of the governor of Khorasan (northeastern Iran, northwestern Afghanistan, and parts of southern Central Asia). Settling in the new city of Basrah, he became famous for his piety and learning.

<sup>399</sup> Mu'adh (bin) Jabal: Mu'adh bin Jabal bin Aws. He helped to collect the revelations contained in the Quran. The Prophet appointed him as the judge of Yemen. He died about AH18/639CE.

Even though Abu Hanifah<sup>400</sup> (R) and Shafi'i<sup>401</sup> (R) and most of the theologians (R) have said that prayer is valid if at the time of the Magnification the soul is disburdened, they issued this legal opinion<sup>402</sup> out of necessity, lest negligence overwhelm the people. The correct meaning of (that opinion) is that the sword is removed from their necks.<sup>403</sup> However, only that amount (of prayer) in which the soul is present is fit to be provision for the Hereafter. In all, there is hope that the condition of a person whose soul is only present at the time of the Magnification will be better than that of him who does not perform the obligatory prayers at all; yet, there is also the fear that his condition will be worse, because a person who presents himself for service negligently may be judged more harshly than one who does not perform his prayers at all. It was for this that Hasan of Basrah (R) used to say: "This prayer is closer to punishment." Indeed, in the Traditions it is related: "Anyone whose praying does not restrain him from vile deeds and abominations has no result from it, save distancing himself from God Most High."

So, after all of this, thou hast learned that a complete formal prayer is that in which the spirit is present in its every part. (A formal prayer) in which it is not present except upon hearing the Magnification, is nothing more than a death gasp; though alive, there is nothing in but a (single) breath.

### DISCLOSING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ACTS OF FORMAL PRAYER

Know that the first thing that reaches thee is the Call to Prayer. When thou hearest it, thou must attach thyself to it in thy soul and cease any other activity thou mayest be performing, for that is what the elders did. When they heard the call to prayer, he who was a blacksmith with his hammer raised in the air would lay it down. He who was a

<sup>400</sup> Abu Hanifah (Abū Ḥanīfah): Imam al-Nu'man bin Thabit bin Zuta Abu Hanifah. The son of a silk dealer, he was a leading scholar of Islamic law and theology and the eponymous founder of the Hanafite school of Islamic law. He earned his living as a silk dealer in his native city. He was born in Kufah in southern Iraq c. AH80/700 and died in a Baghdad prison in AH150/CE776, imprisoned by the Abbasid Caliph Mansur (rgd. AH136/CE754 to AH158/CE775) for refusing to accept the post of judge (*qādi*) in Kufah. A brilliant intellectual and theologian, he is the reputed founder of the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. Apparently, no authentic writings of his own are extant, but his influence on the development of Islamic law and ethics is incalculable. Today, more Muslims adhere to the Hanafite school than any other.

<sup>401</sup> Shafi'i: Imam Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafi'i was the founder of one of the four orthodox (or Sunnite) schools of religious jurisprudence. He was born in Askalon (or nearby Gaza) in Palestine in AH150/767CE and died in Cairo in AH204/820CE. Unlike Abu Hanifah, he left behind a considerable body of writings.

<sup>402</sup> "legal opinion": *fatwā*.

<sup>403</sup> See Note 391 above.

shoemaker, if he was driving his awl, would leave it where it was. They would jump up from their places, reminded by this caller of the summons on the Day of Resurrection. They knew that whoever hurries at this time to answer that summons will not be met by anything at the Resurrection except glad tidings. If it be in this way that thou look upon this summoner, with thine own soul full of joy and eagerness, know that thou wilt be received in the same by that Summoner.

**THE PURIFICATION:** The secret of the purification is that thou knowest that the cleanliness of the clothing and the skin is the cleanliness of the sheathe. The spirit of this purification is the cleanliness of the soul through repentance, regret, and the avoidance of disagreeable habits; that is what God Most High looks at. The place of the true nature of formal prayer is the soul, but the body is the place of the form of formal prayer.

**COVERING THE PRIVATE PARTS:** The meaning of this is that thou coverest from the eyes of people those parts of thine outer form that are unseemly. Its spirit and secret is that thou coverest all that is unseemly of thine inner being from the gaze of God Most High and that thou knowest that nothing can be concealed from Him except that which thou cleansest from within. And, that is cleansed when thou hast regret for the past and determine not to return to that, for: *One who repents of his sins is as one who has not sinned.* Repentance turns sins into trivialities. If thou canst, veil thy privates in shame, fear, and abashment and stand before God Most High broken-hearted and abashed, like a run-away slave who stands with an ashamed heart before his own master and does not raise his head out of his own disgrace.

**TURNING TO THE DIRECTION OF PRAYER:**<sup>404</sup> The (external) meaning of this is that one turns his physical face from all other directions to one direction. The secret of this is that one turns the countenance of the soul from all that is in the two worlds<sup>405</sup> to focus upon God Most High and to become of one nature. Just as the physical direction of formal prayer is one, so the direction of formal prayer of the soul is one, and that is God Most High. When the soul flows through the valley of thoughts, it is as though the physical face were turning from side to side. As this is not the manner of formal prayer, (distracted thoughts) are not the true nature of formal prayer. In regard to this, the Messenger (S) said: "Whoever stands in formal prayer and his mind, his face, and his soul, all three, are with God Most High, that servant (of

<sup>404</sup> The direction of prayer is known as the *qiblah*. From wherever one is performing a formal prayer, it is the direction of Makkah, or more specifically, the House or Ka'bah situated in the heart of the city.

<sup>405</sup> That is, this world and the Hereafter.

God) returns from formal prayer as though on that day he had been newly born from his mother; that is, he is cleansed of all sins."

So, know truly that just as by turning the physical face away from the direction of formal prayer, the form of the prayer is nullified, so turning the face of the soul from God Most High by carrying other thoughts (to the formal prayer) nullifies the true nature of the spirit of formal prayer. Moreover, the soul takes priority, for the external is the sheathe of the internal. What is important is that which is within the sheathe; the sheathe has little value.

**THE STANDING:** Externally, this is that the body stands with lowered head, like a servant, before God Most High. Its secret is that the soul has ceased all movement and is prepared for service in the way of glorification and contrition. At this time, one must remember one's position before God Most High at the Resurrection. At that time, all of one's secrets will be revealed and paraded before one. One knows, too, that at this time all of one's secrets are plainly visible to God Most High. He sees everything that is in one's soul or that was in it, and one knows that He is informed of one's interior and exterior.

How strange it is that a righteous person, when someone is observing him to see how he performs his prayer, moves his limbs according to rule and does not look from side to side. He is ashamed to be seen or noticed hurrying in his prayer by someone else, yet (though) he knows that God Most High observes him, he is not ashamed before Him! What ignorance is greater than this that he be careful to pray according to rule in front of a helpless servant who has nothing, yet does not fear the eye of the King of Kings and relaxes his conduct before Him?

It was for this that Abu Hurayrah<sup>406</sup> (R) asked: "O Messenger of God, how should one be modest before God Most High?" He replied: "Just as a righteous person is modest before his own family."

It is for reason of this glorification (of God) that when a group of the Companions (R) were quietly at prayer, birds would not fly away from them. The birds thought that the people were statues. All of the limbs of whoever accepts the greatness of God Most High in his soul and realizes that He is watching him are submissive. And regarding this, when the Messenger (S) saw a person stroking his beard during prayer, he said: "If there were humility in his soul, his hand would also have been like his soul."

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<sup>406</sup> Abu Hurayrah: 'Abd al-Rahman bin Kahr Abu Hurayrah. One of the Companions of the Prophet and a most important source for the Traditions. Abu Hurayrah (father of the kitten) was very fond of a kitten; hence the nickname. Because of his position in the Prophets' household, he related more Traditions than any other individual. He died at Madinah in AH59/678CE.

**BOWING AND PROSTRATION:** Know that it is, externally, the humbling of the body; the purpose of their secret is the humbling of the soul so that one may understand that putting the face on the ground—the placing of the most precious of one's body parts on the dirt, which is the lowliest of things—is so that one may know that one's origin is from earth and one's return will be to it. One shows pride appropriate to one's origin in order to understand one's own unworthiness and helplessness. In the same way, there is for every act a true nature and a secret; if one neglects them, nothing redounds to him from his acts save the outer form.

### DISCLOSING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE RECITATION (OF THE QURAN) AND REMEMBRANCES (OF GOD) IN FORMAL PRAYER

Know that every word that must be uttered during prayer has a truth that must be understood. The speaker must be of a character to be truly sincere. For example: the meaning of *Allāhu Akbar* is "God is Greater." If one does not know this meaning, he is ignorant; if he knows it, but there is something in his soul greater than God Most High, he is not truthful. It will be said to him: "These words are the truth, but thou art speaking lies." Whenever something else is obeyed more than God Most High, that thing is greater to him, his object of worship, and his "god"<sup>407</sup> which he serves. As God Most High says: *Hast thou seen him who takes his low desires for his god?* (Q. 25:43)

And when he said: *I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth*, if at that moment his soul was concerned with something else, then his statement was a lie. When the first words in the conversation with God Most High is a lie, the danger is obvious. And, when he said: *as a true believer and as a Muslim*, he claimed to be a Muslim. But the Messenger (S) said: "A Muslim is he from whose hands and tongue the Muslims are safe." He must possess these qualities or seek to become like that.

When he says: *Praise be to God*, he must renew the blessing of God Most High in his soul, and his soul must be turned into total gratitude, for this is the word of gratitude, and gratitude is in the soul.

And when he says: *Thee do we worship and Thee do we beseech for help*, the truth of sincerity must be renewed in his soul.

When he says: *Guide us*, his soul must take on the qualities of supplication and lamentation, begging for guidance. Every word in praise and the declaration (that *there is no god but God*), and in the recitation (of verses from the Quran) must be thus, as he knows. His soul is

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<sup>407</sup> The "god" (*ilāh*) that Ghazzali refers to is the one denied in the Testimony: "There is no god but God."

transformed into those qualities; but the exposition of that would be lengthy.

If there is to be a portion of the true nature of the formal prayer (for the one praying), it must be like that. If not, one has contented oneself with a meaningless form.

### **DISCLOSING THE REMEDY FOR THE SOUL SO THAT IT WILL BECOME PRESENT (IN PRAYER)**

Know that there are two causes for the heedlessness of the soul during prayer; one is external, and the other internal:

(EXTERNAL) As for that which is external (heedlessness), it is that one prays in a place where one sees and hears, and one's soul becomes distracted by that, for the soul is the follower of the eye and the ear. The remedy for this is that one should pray in a place where one cannot hear anything. If the place is in darkness, so much the better—or one can close the eyes. Most devotees have constructed a small dark room for worship; for in a large place the soul is more (easily) distracted. Ibn 'Umar (R) whenever he prayed, removed his sword, books, and every garment from in front of him lest his eye would fall on them.

(INTERNAL) The second cause is internal: it is scattered thoughts and memories. This is more difficult and harder, and is of two kinds:

One comes from some activity that for a time is preoccupying the soul. The tactic for that is to complete the work first in order to make the soul free (of the preoccupation) and then perform the prayer. For this, the Messenger (S) said: "*When dinner is ready at the same time as the evening prayer, first eat the dinner.*" In the same way, if some one has something to say, let him say it before (praying) so that his soul may be empty of that thought.

The other kind is the thinking about a work that cannot be completed in an hour, or the scattered thoughts that normally overwhelm the soul. The remedy for this is to keep the soul focused on the meaning of the remembrances and (the verses of) the Quran one is reciting and to think about their meaning in order to drive away the other thoughts. This quiets the worries and, if it does not conquer them, the appetite for them will not be so strong. However, if the appetite is strong, thinking about it will not be overcome in this way. The solution is to take a purge to eradicate the source of the illness. This purge is the abandonment of that thing about which one is concerned in order to escape from it. If this is not possible, one will never be freed from these thoughts and one's prayer will always be mixed with the whisperings of the self.

He is like the person who sits under a tree and does not wish to listen to the chirping of the sparrows in it. He seizes a stick in his hand and drives them away, but they quickly return. If he wants to be free of

them, the solution is to cut down the tree; for as long as the tree remains, the sparrows will flock to it. In the same way, as long as the appetite for some matter occupies his soul, scattered thoughts will necessarily stay with him.

It was for this that when the Messenger (S) was brought a fine robe with beautiful designs on it as a gift and his eye fell upon the pattern during prayer, he returned the robe to the owner as soon as the prayer was over and put his old clothing back on. And, new straps were put on his slippers. His eye fell on the straps during prayer; they were fine. So, he ordered that they be taken off and the old straps put back on. Another time, brand new slippers were made for him. He found them beautiful. So he prostrated himself and said: "I have humbled myself, O God, may He be exalted and glorified, so that tomorrow Thou dost not take me as Thine enemy for that glance." He took them off and gave them to the first needy person he saw.

Once Talhah<sup>408</sup> (R) was performing his prayer in his own date-palm garden. He saw a beautiful bird that was flying among the palms but could not find a way out. His soul became concerned (about the bird) and he lost count of the number of bows he had performed. Later, he went to the Messenger (S) and complained about his soul, and he gave the palm garden away in charity as the expiation (for that lapse).

The forefathers did many things like that and knew the remedy for (achieving) the presence of the soul. In short, if remembrance of God Most High has not overcome the soul before prayer, it will not be present during the formal prayer. Thoughts that have been admitted to the soul to the extent that they occur during prayer will not leave the soul. Whenever one wants to pray with the presence of the soul, he must treat the soul outside of prayer so that it is empty (of worldly concerns). This is accomplished by always keeping the concerns of the world at a distance from oneself and being satisfied with the world according to one's needs. And the purpose, too, of this satisfaction (of needs) is the freedom for worship. If this not be the case, the soul will not be present, except in a few prayers. One must increase the supererogatory prayers<sup>409</sup> and prepare the soul to the point that it will be present for, say, four bows of prayer; for supererogatory prayers compensate for the obligatory.

<sup>408</sup> Talhah: Talhah bin 'Ubayd Allah al-Taymi. An early convert to Islam, he became a general and a wealthy land owner. When about 64 years old, he was killed in battle fighting against 'Ali in AH35/656CE.

<sup>409</sup> "supererogatory prayers": *nawā'il*.

### DISCLOSING THE PRACTICES OF THE PROPHET OF CONGREGATIONAL FORMAL PRAYER

The Messenger (S) said: "One formal prayer with the congregation is like twenty-seven formal prayers alone." And he said: "Whoever performs the evening obligatory formal prayer with a congregation is as though he had spent half the night in formal prayer and supplication. Whoever performs the dawn obligatory formal prayer with a congregation is as though he spent the entire night in formal prayer and supplication." And he said: "For whoever performs obligatory formal prayer with the congregation continuously for forty days so as not to miss the first Magnification, two patents of innocence are written: one from hypocrisy and the other from hellfire." It was for this reason that whenever some one from among the forefathers missed the first Magnification, he mourned for three days. If he missed an obligatory formal congregational prayer, (he mourned) for seven days.

Sa'id Musayyib<sup>410</sup> says: "I have heard the call to the dawn obligatory formal prayer for twenty years; it has never happened that I was not in the mosque before that." Many religious scholars have said: "It is not right for a person who has no excuse to perform an obligatory formal prayer alone." Therefore, it is most important to regard congregational formal prayer highly and to observe the rules of conduct for leading the formal prayer and for following the imam.

The first is that no one should be made the imam except with willing agreement of the people who make him thus. One must be careful that he is not disliked. When he is asked (to lead the formal prayer), he should not refuse without an excuse, for the merit of being the imam is great, greater than that of the summoner to prayer.<sup>411</sup> He must take care about the purification of his garments and observe the times of obligatory formal prayers and commence them at the beginning of its time period,<sup>412</sup> not waiting for the congregation. The merit of the prayer at the beginning of its time period is great. When two of the Companions were present, they did not wait for a third. At a funeral prayer, when there were four

<sup>410</sup> Sa'id Musayyib: Sa'id bin al-Musayyib al-Qurashi al-Makhzuni. He was of the generation following the Companions called the Followers (*tābi'īn*). He was famous for his judicial decisions (*fatuwā*) and was called the *faqih al-fuqahā* (the jurist of the jurists) and also the Lord of the Followers (*sayyid al-tābi'īn*). He is quoted as saying that he would walk nights and days in search of a single Tradition. He died AH94/712CE.

<sup>411</sup> "the summoner to prayer": *mu'adhdhin*.

<sup>412</sup> The day is divided into periods for each obligatory formal prayer. For example, the noon prayer begins at high noon (according to the position of the sun, not according to the clock) and lasts until mid-afternoon when the period for the afternoon prayer commences. Ghazzali says that performing obligatory formal prayers at the beginning of their portion of the day is more meritorious than later on within the limits of that period, although a prayer is equally valid when performed any time within those parameters.

persons present, they did not wait for a fifth. One day the Messenger(S) was delayed, and they did not wait for him. ‘Abdurrahman ‘Awf went forward (to lead the prayer). When the Messenger (S) arrived, one bow had been completed. When the prayer was over, they were anxious (about the Prophet’s reaction to this), but the Messenger (S) said: “Ye have done well. Always do thus.”

Leading the prayer should be performed purely for God, and the imam should not accept any payment. The Magnification should not be pronounced until the lines are straight. He should raise his voice when pronouncing the Magnifications and then recite the Intention of Imamate in order to receive its spiritual reward. If he does not, the congregational prayer is valid, but the spiritual reward for leading the congregation does not redound to him.

He should recite the Quran loudly in *jahri*<sup>413</sup> prayers and observe three silent pauses: First: after pronouncing the Magnification, while he is reciting: *I turn my face...*,<sup>414</sup> and the congregation is preparing for the recitation of the Opening; second: after reciting the Opening, he should pause so that the slower members of the congregation may complete their recitations of it; and third: after reciting the other passage from the Quran, he should pause long enough so that the Magnification will be separate from the Quranic recitation. The members of the congregation do not recite anything after the Opening, unless they are too far away to hear the recitation of the imam. He performs the bows and prostrations unhurriedly and does not utter the praise more than three times.

Anas<sup>415</sup> (R) says: “No one was more unhurried or more complete in prayer than the Messenger (S).” The Practice of the Prophet is that prayer not be prolonged, as there may be persons in the congregation who are weak or have some business to attend to. The congregation must move after the imam does, not at the same time. They do not press their foreheads to the ground in the prostration before the imam has done so. They do not begin their bow until the imam has reached the limit of his, for this is (the meaning of) *following* the imam. If one deliberately precedes the imam, one’s prayer is nullified. After the salutations (at the end of prayer), (the imam) should not sit long before saying: *O God, Thou art the Peace, Peace is from Thee, Thou hast given blessings, O Lord of Majesty and Veneration.*

Then (the imam) rises slowly and faces the people and offers supplications. The people should not turn their faces away from him, for that is disliked.

<sup>413</sup> “*Jahri* prayers”: Those prayers in which the Opening (*Al-Fatiha*) and the following Quranic selections are recited aloud in the first two bows, i.e., the dawn, sunset, and evening prayers.

<sup>414</sup> See Note 374.

<sup>415</sup> Anas: Anas Malik. See Note 358.

## DISCLOSING THE MERIT OF THE FRIDAY CONGREGATIONAL FORMAL PRAYER

Know that Friday is a great day and its merit is enormous. It is the festival of the believers. The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever does not attend three Friday prayers without excuse has discarded Islam and his soul is tarnished."

In the Traditions, it is related that on every Friday God Most High liberates six hundred thousand servants from hell. The Messenger (S) said: "Every day (the heat of) hell flares up at the time of decline of the sun, except on Friday. On that day, it does not flare up." And he said: "Whoever dies on a Friday receives the reward of a martyr and is exempted from the torment of the grave."

### THE CONDITIONS OF FRIDAY CONGREGATIONAL FORMAL PRAYER

Know that just as there are conditions for other formal prayers, so there are (additional) conditions for the Friday congregational prayer. There are six additional special conditions:

The first condition is time. If the imam should utter the final salutations after the time for the afternoon obligatory formal prayer has begun, the prayer is lost and should be completed as though it were the noon obligatory formal prayer.

The second condition is place. This formal prayer is not convened in the desert or among tents. Instead, it must be held in a city or a village in which there are at least forty adult, sane, and free men resident. If it is not held in a mosque, is it valid.

The third condition is number. It is not correct to hold the Friday congregational obligatory formal prayer unless forty free, legally competent residents are present. If fewer than this number are present, either in the sermon or in the obligatory formal prayer, it would appear to be invalid.

The fourth condition is the congregation. If the each of the people performs formal prayer alone, it is not correct. However, if a person comes in time for the last bow, his formal prayer is valid, even if he is alone in the second bow.<sup>416</sup> If he arrives too late for the second bow, then he recites the Intention for the noon obligatory formal prayer.<sup>417</sup>

<sup>416</sup> The make-up bow to compensate for a missed bow or bows in a congregational prayer due to late arrival.

<sup>417</sup> The obligatory Friday congregational prayer has two bows and is performed in lieu of the usual obligatory noon prayer of four bows. If one arrives too late to participate in the obligatory Friday congregational prayer, one should perform the four-bow noon prayer.

The fifth condition is that one has not performed another Friday congregational formal prayer,<sup>418</sup> for it is not lawful to perform two such prayers in the same city, except if the situation is that the prayer (area) is filled to capacity or performing the prayer in it is difficult. If one cannot (pray there) and performs a second Friday formal prayer, it is valid if the first Magnification has been uttered before.

The sixth condition is that there be two sermons before the formal prayer; both are obligatory. Sitting between the two sermons is obligatory (upon the imam) and standing during the sermons is obligatory (upon the imam). During the first sermon, four things are obligatory: Praising God—saying *Praise be God* is enough; blessing the Messenger (S); advising piety—*I counsel the servants of God to devote themselves to God* is sufficient; and to recite at least one verse from the Quran. There are the same obligations in the second sermon, but instead of a verse from the Quran, a supplication is offered.

Know that this obligatory (Friday congregational) formal prayer is not required of women, slaves, children, and travelers. It is lawful not to attend for reason of mud, rain, and sickness—so that the illness may not spread—but it is preferred that such a person perform the obligatory noon prayer after the congregation has dispersed from the obligatory Friday prayer.

#### THE (TEN) RULES OF ETIQUETTE AT THE FRIDAY PRAYER

Know that there are ten Practices of the Messenger, and people should observe (these) rules of etiquette:

*THE FIRST ETIQUETTE:* Greeting Friday on Thursday with thy soul; preparing such things as white clothing, taking care of other activities beforehand so that one may betake himself to the mosque early; sitting quietly after the afternoon prayer on Thursday in praise and seeking forgiveness—for the virtue of this hour is very great and is (more) excellent in comparison with that hour on Friday. It has also been said that lying with one's wife is a practice of the Prophet so that she too will need to perform the greater ablution (bath), both (husband and wife), on Friday.

*THE SECOND ETIQUETTE:* One should perform the greater ablution the early morning if one wishes to go the mosque early; if not, it is preferred to delay. The Messenger (S) ordered the Friday bath, a definite order to the point where some of religious scholars have supposed that it is a divinely imposed obligation. The people of Madinah, when they wanted to speak harshly to someone, would say: "Thou art worse than a person who does not bathe on Friday." If

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<sup>418</sup> That is, on the same Friday.

someone is in a state of ritual impurity, when he has performed the greater ablution for that, it is preferred that he recite the intention to perform the Friday bath and again throw water over himself. However, if he declares both intentions<sup>419</sup> together, (one bath) will suffice and he will obtain the reward of the Friday bath.

**THE THIRD ETIQUETTE:** One should go to the mosque well-turned out, clean, and in a good state. Cleanliness is that one should remove (unwanted) hair, pare the nails, and trim the mustache. If one has gone to the bath earlier and done these things, that will suffice. Well-turned out is that one wears clean white clothing—for God Most High likes white clothing—applies some pleasant fragrance, with the intention of showing respect to the mosque and for the obligatory formal prayer, so that no unpleasant odor may emit from his person to disturb others and cause them to talk about him.

**THE FOURTH ETIQUETTE:** Going to the mosque early, for its merit is great. In the old days, they used to repair to the mosque in the early morning carrying lamps. The roads were so crowded that it was difficult to walk. Ibn Mas'ud,<sup>420</sup> may God have mercy upon him, went on a path and found that three men had gotten (to the mosque) before he had. He rebuked himself and said: "Thou art in the fourth degree! What will be the outcome for thee?"

They used to say that the first innovation that appeared in Islam was the omission of the practices of the Messenger. How is it that while Jews and Christians go early to synagogues and churches on Saturday and Sunday, Muslims are laggards on Friday, which is their day?

The Messenger (S) has said: "For the person who goes at the first hour on this day to the mosque, it is as though he has sacrificed a camel. If he goes at the second hour, it is as though he has sacrificed a cow; at the third hour, a sheep; at the fourth hour, a chicken; at the fifth hour, an egg. If he goes at the time the imam is ascending the pulpit, the angels who were recording these sacrifices roll up their scrolls and become attentive to the sermon. Whoever arrives at this time has the reward of the obligatory prayer, but nothing else."

**FIFTH (ETIQUETTE):** Not to climb over people if one is late, for it is related in the Traditions that should a person do that, at the Resurrection, they will make a bridge of him for the people to pass over. The Messenger (S) saw someone doing this. When the prayer was completed, he asked the man: "Why didst thou not participate in the obligatory prayer?" He said: "O Messenger of God, I am here with thee."

<sup>419</sup> That is, the intention to perform the greater and ablution to restore the state of purity and the intention to perform the greater ablution for Friday.

<sup>420</sup> Ibn Mas'ud: 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, a Companion of the Prophet and one of the "illustrious ten" ("asharah mubashsharah) who were assured of Paradise by the Prophet. He died at Madinah in AH32/652CE at the age of 60.

The Messenger said: "I saw thee crawling over the congregation." That is to say, for a person who does thus it is as though he had not attended the prayer. However, if there be an empty place in the first row, it is lawful to aim for that first, for the fault is those who left the first row incomplete.

**THE SIXTH ETIQUETTE:** One should not pass in front of a person performing his prayer. When one sits by a wall or column, one should sit close to it so that there is no passage in front of him, for it is forbidden to pass in front of someone who is praying. In the Traditions, it is related: "If dust is raised so that the breeze blows it at him, it is better than passing in front of one who is praying."

**THE SEVENTH ETIQUETTE:** One should seek (to pray in) the first rank. If one is not able to, howsoever closer to it the better, for its merit is great, unless there are soldiers in the front rank wearing silk clothing, or the black clothing of the preacher is silken, or his sword is of gold, or some other prohibited thing. In that case, the farther away one is the better, for it is not appropriate to choose a place where there is some prohibited thing.

**THE EIGHTH ETIQUETTE:** When the preacher comes out, one should not talk and should attend to the replies (to the phrases) of the summoner to assemble for formal prayer, then pay attention to the sermon. If someone speaks, one should silence him with a gesture, not with words, for the Messenger (S) said: "Whoever says 'Be quiet!' during the sermon, or 'Listen!' speaks idly; whoever speaks idly at this time has not attended the Friday congregational prayer."

If one is seated far away and cannot hear the sermon, he still must remain silent, nor should he sit anyplace where people are talking. He should not perform any formal prayer at that time, except the Greeting to the Mosque.<sup>421</sup>

**THE NINTH ETIQUETTE:** After one prays, one should recite "*the Praise*" seven times,<sup>422</sup> "Say, He is the One God"<sup>423</sup> seven times. He should also recite the two "*I seek refuge*'s",<sup>424</sup> for in the non-Prophetic Traditions,<sup>425</sup> it is written: "They are like a refuge from Satan from one Friday to the next." Then one should say: "*O God! O Free From Want (Ghani)! O Praised One! O Inceptor! O Restorer! O Merciful! O Friend! Bestow upon me from what is lawful to Thee rather than what is unlawful, and in obedience to Thee rather than from Thy punishment,*

<sup>421</sup> The Greeting to the Mosque: a two-bow supererogatory prayer performed upon entering a mosque.

<sup>422</sup> One should recite the first chapter of the Quran, the Opening (*Fatihah*) seven times.

<sup>423</sup> One should recite the 112th chapter of the Quran seven times.

<sup>424</sup> One should recite the 113th and 114th chapters of the Quran once. They both begin *Say: I seek refuge with my Lord...*

<sup>425</sup> "Traditions, non-Prophetic": *āthār*.

*and from Thy grace rather than from anyone other than Thee!*" It is said: "Whoever persists in this invocation, his sustenance will appear from a place from which he had no hope and will become free of needing (the help) of others."

After this, one performs six bows of formal prayer, the Practice of the Prophet, for this is the number which has been ascribed to the Messenger (S).

**THE TENTH ETIQUETTE:** One should remain in the mosque until the time for the afternoon prayer has come. It is even more meritorious to sit in the mosque until the sunset prayer. It is said: "This has the reward of the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimage."<sup>426</sup> And if one is not able to do this and returns home, he should remember God Most High until that time,<sup>427</sup> and not neglect this while Friday lasts, lest he be deprived of its grace.

### THE (SEVEN) RULES FOR FRIDAY

One should strive for seven virtues throughout all of this day:

The *FIRST* rule is to attend an edifying assembly in the early morning and to avoid storytellers and circles of gossips. One should repair to the assembly of a person whose speech and conduct do not excite love for the world, but rather invite one to the Hereafter. Any talk which is not like that is not an assembly for edification. However, if it is (an edifying assembly), there is a Tradition that states: "Attending one such assembly is more meritorious than a thousand bows of formal prayer."

*SECOND:* During this day, there is a precious and noble hour. In the Traditions is related: "Whoever makes a request during this hour, it is granted." There is a dispute about which hour is meant: Is it the time of the rising of the sun or its declining?<sup>428</sup> Is it sunset or is at the time of the call to formal prayer? Is it the moment the preacher ascends the pulpit, or the time when congregation assembles in ranks for formal prayer? Is it the time of the afternoon obligatory formal prayer? The truth is that its exact time is unknown and ambiguous, like the Night of Power.<sup>429</sup>

<sup>426</sup> The Greater Pilgrimage is called *Hajj*, and the Lesser is called "*Umrah*.

<sup>427</sup> That is, the sunset obligatory formal prayer, for in the Islamic calendar, the next day (Saturday) begins at sunset, in accordance with Semitic custom, rather than at midnight as is the Western custom. Friday ends with the call to prayer for the sunset prayer, which begins Saturday.

<sup>428</sup> That is, late afternoon.

<sup>429</sup> The Night of Power (*shab-i qadr*): this is mentioned 97th chapter of the Quran: *Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power. Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is? The night of Power is better than a thousand months! The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord with all decrees. Peace, until the rising of the*

Therefore, one must be alert for it throughout the day and never stop remembering (God) and worshipping (Him).

*THIRD:* During this day one should send many blessings upon the Messenger (S), for he said: "The sins of eighty years are forgiven for him who sends blessings upon me eighty times." They asked him: 'O Messenger of God, how should we send these blessings?' He said: 'O God, bless Muhammad and bless the people of Muhammad with a blessing that is acceptable to Thee and rendered for his truth! Grant him the means and the merit. Send him to the praiseworthy place Thou hast promised him. Reward him on our behalf that which is best of what Thou dost reward a prophet on behalf of his people. Bless all of his brothers from among the righteous prophets, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!'

It is said: "Whoever repeats this on Friday seven times will receive the intercession of the Messenger (S); it is assured." If one says only "O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad," it is enough.

*FOURTH:* One should read the Quran much during this day. One should read *The Chapter of the Cave*,<sup>430</sup> its merit is mentioned in the Traditions. The ascetics of the forefathers used to recite *The Chapter of the Unity*<sup>431</sup> a thousand times on Friday and bless (the Prophet) a thousand times and say a thousand times: "Glory be to God! Praise be to God! There is no god but God and God is greater."

*FIFTH:* On this day one should perform more (formal) prayers. In the Traditions, it is related: "Whoever goes to the mosque should immediately perform a four-bow prayer. In each bow, he should recite the Opening once and Say: He is God, the One!"<sup>432</sup> fifty times. Such a one will not depart from this world without having been shown his place in heaven or having it shown to someone else who will inform him of it."<sup>433</sup>

dawn. (Q. 97:1-5) Much has been written through the centuries about the meaning and the spiritual and mystical interpretation of this chapter. There is a consensus that it is one of the last ten nights of Ramadan, probably the 25th, 27th, or 29th night. It appears to be associated with the first revelation of the Quran received by the Prophet. The revelations continued for about 23 years.

<sup>430</sup> "The Chapter of The Cave" (*Sūrat al-Kahf*): the 18th chapter of the Quran.

<sup>431</sup> "The Chapter of the Unity" (*Sūrat al-Ikhlas*): the 112th chapter of the Quran. The word *ikhlās* literally means "sincerity, loyalty, fidelity." As it comes from a root meaning "being pure, being saved from, being liberated," it can be construed to mean 'being cleansed of (polytheism, or other-than-God). Among other things, it is a refutation of the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Jesus and his fatherhood by God.

<sup>432</sup> These are the first words of the Chapter of the Unity mentioned in the previous Note. It should be remarked that this chapter is among the shortest in the Quran, consisting of fewer than twenty words in Arabic.

<sup>433</sup> That is, someone else will see his place in an inspired dream and inform him of it.

It is recommended that on this day one recite the following four chapters in these four bows: *The Cattle*, *The Cave*, *Ta Ha*, and *Ya Sin*.<sup>434</sup> If one cannot do this, then one should recite: *The Prostration*, *Luqman*, *Smoke*, and *The Sovereignty*.<sup>435</sup>

Ibn 'Abbas (R) never omitted the formal prayer of praise<sup>436</sup> on Friday; this formal prayer is well known. It is preferred that one pray until noon.<sup>437</sup> After that, one should attend some edifying assembly until the time of the afternoon prayer, and after that, engage in praise and seeking forgiveness until the sunset prayer.

**SIXTH:** One should not neglect giving alms on this day, even if it is nothing more than a piece of bread; for the merit of almsgiving on this day is increased, but any beggar who begs at the time of the sermon should be stopped. It is unseemly to give something to such a person.

**SEVENTH:** In general, one must, this day of the week, regard the Hereafter with certainty. One should devote the whole day to good works, and do the work of the world on other days. For God Most High says: *And when the prayer is ended, then disperse throughout the land and seek of God's grace.* (Q. 62:10) Anas (R) says: "This does not mean buying and selling and the business of the world; rather, it is the seeking of knowledge, visiting brethren and the ill, accompanying the (funeral) cortege, and acts such as these."

**DISCUSSION:** Know that what is absolutely necessary about formal prayer has been said. Other matters should be asked as the occasion arises, for they cannot be discussed in a book of this kind. However, there are many devilish insinuations in one's Intention to perform the prayer. They should be remarked upon here.

Know that these insinuations occur to a person who has some flaw in his mind, or is a melancholic, or is ignorant of the Religious Law and does not know the significance of the Intention. Thine intention is the desire that turns thy face to the direction of formal prayer. It inspires

<sup>434</sup> "The Cattle (*al-Anā'ām*), The Cave (*al-Kahf*), *Tā Hā*, and *Yā Sin*": These are the 6th, the 18th, the 20th, and the 36th chapters of the Quran respectively. The last two take their names from the Arabic letters, the like of which head several chapters. The significance of these letters is the subject of much speculation.

<sup>435</sup> "The Prostration (*al-Sajdah*), Luqman, Smoke (*al-Dukhān*), and The Sovereignty (*al-Mulk*)": these are the 32nd, the 31st, the 44th, and the 67th chapters of the Quran respectively.

<sup>436</sup> "Formal prayer of praise": *tasbih*.

<sup>437</sup> Noon: the text has *waqt-i zawāl* which is capable of several interpretations. Literally, it means 'the time of the decline'; that is, the point where the sun starts to decline from its zenith in the sky, which is the true noon. (This is not necessarily the same as noon according to modern time zones.) The period referred to by Ghazzali is the forenoon.

thee to rise to thy feet and follow its command. It is as though someone says to thee: "Such-and-such a learned scholar has come! Stand up for him and venerate him!" Thou dost not say to thyself: "I have formed the Intention to stand on my feet in respect for such a person and at the command of such-and-such a person." Instead, thou standest up immediately and the intention is in thy soul, without thy saying the words in thy soul or with thy tongue. All that thou sayest to the soul is talking to thyself, not the declaration of Intention, for the intention is that eagerness which appears in the soul and impels thee (to act).

Moreover, thou must know what the command is: that it is for the performance of the noon prayer or the afternoon prayer. When the soul is not neglectful of this, thou sayest *God is Greater!* If it is negligent, thou reminst thyself. Do not suppose that the meaning of the performance of a divine command and the noon obligatory formal prayer are collected at once in the soul in detail; because they are near to each other, they (only) seem to be collected. This is sufficient, for if some one says to thee: "Art thou performing the obligatory noon formal prayer?" thou sayest: "Yes." At the moment thou sayest "yes," the general meanings of this are in thy soul, not the details.

So thy speaking to thyself—as a reminder—is the same as the question of that person, and "*God is Greater*" takes the place of thy saying "yes." Anything more than that is an enquiry which will distract thy soul and the prayer. Thou must take it easy. If thou hast done this much, in the proper manner, know that the prayer is valid, for the Intention of prayer is like the intention of all acts. For this reason, during the time of the Messenger (S), none of the Companions (R) were ever disturbed with reservations about the declaration of the Intention, for they knew that the matter was easier (than that). As for that person who does not know this, it is out of his ignorance.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCERNING THE POOR RATE

Know that the obligatory poor rate<sup>438</sup> is one of the Pillars of Islam, for the Messenger (S) said: “The edifice of Islam is built upon five things: the Testimony that *There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God*; formal prayer, the obligatory poor rate, fasting, and the (Greater) Pilgrimage.” In the Traditions, it is related: “A fiery brand will be placed on the breasts of those who possess gold and silver and do not pay the poor rate so that it comes out of their backs. Whoever possesses animals<sup>439</sup> and does not pay the poor rate will be overcome by them on the Day of Resurrection so that they will gore him with their horns and trample him under their hoofs. When they have done all this, they will start over again. They will continue to do so until that time all people are called to account.” This Tradition is found in two of the authentic books of traditions.<sup>440</sup> Therefore, (the poor rate) is incumbent upon someone possessing property and a religious obligation to know the rules for paying it.

### EXCURSUS: CONCERNING THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF POOR RATE AND THEIR CONDITIONS

Know that the obligatory poor rate is of six<sup>441</sup> kinds:

*THE FIRST KIND: THE POOR RATE ON LIVESTOCK.* These are camels, cattle, and sheep. However, the poor rate is not paid on animals such as horses and donkeys. Four conditions regarding this poor rate must be observed:

The first condition: They must not be animals that are fed fodder; rather, they must be grazers not requiring much expense. If, during the year, (the grazing animals) are fed enough fodder to be considered fodder-eating animals, then they are no longer subject to the poor rate.

The second condition: They must be the property of the owner for the entire year. If they leave one’s ownership, they are not subject to

<sup>438</sup> The poor rate (*zakāt*) is an obligatory annual tax on certain kinds of property. Voluntary charity or alms is called *sadaqah*.

<sup>439</sup> Animals of commercial value such as beasts of burden, cattle, sheep, and other livestock.

<sup>440</sup> A reference to the six books of traditions compiled by pious scholars in the 3rd Islamic (late 9th and early 10th CE) century. They are all considered authentic (*sahīh*) by Sunni Muslims. Those by Bukhari and Abu Muslim are the most highly regarded of the six.

<sup>441</sup> Both Persian texts have only five, the ‘Id tax being the fifth. A comparison with the Arabic *Revival* shows that the fifth kind was the poor rate on mines, absent from the Persian texts. In the *Revival*, the ‘Id tax is the sixth kind.

the poor rate. On the other hand, their offspring are counted, even if they are born at the end of the year and the poor rate must be paid for them following the principle of assets.

The third condition: One gains wealth from that property and it is in one's control. However, if (the animals) are lost or taken from one by force, the poor rate does not apply to them, unless they are returned to him with all profit that would have been earned from them. Then, (the payment of) the poor rate for the past becomes obligatory. If someone is in debt, in an amount equaling the livestock he possesses, it is correct that he not pay the poor rate, for in truth he is poor.

The fourth condition: One must possess the requisite wealth in an amount to be counted among the wealthy (and thus subject to the poor rate), for wealth is not obtained from a small amount.

As for camels: Unless there be five (or more), (payment of the poor rate) for them is not required. For five camels, (the payment is) one sheep; for ten, two; for fifteen, three; for twenty, four. These sheep must be at least one year old. (If the payment is made) in goats, not less than two years old. If there be twenty-five camels, then it is one one-year old female camel. If there be none, then a two-year old male may given in its place. Thereafter, nothing additional is required until there are thirty-six. For thirty-six, a two-year old female is necessary; for forty-six, a three-year old female; for sixty-one, a four-year old female; for seventy-six, two two-year old females; for ninety-one, two three-year old females; for one hundred and twenty-one, three two-year old females. After that, the calculation is that for every fifty, one three-year old female and for every forty, a two-year old female.

As for cattle: No poor rate is required until their number is thirty. Then a one-year old is necessary; for forty, a two-year old; for sixty, two one-year olds. After that, the calculation is one two-year old for every forty, and a one-year old is given for every thirty.

As for sheep: For each forty, one; for one hundred and twenty-one, two; for two hundred and one, three; for four hundred, four. After that, the calculation is one for every one hundred not less than a year old. If it is male, then not less than two years old would be suitable.<sup>442</sup> If there are two persons whose sheep are held jointly and both are of sufficient means to qualify for the poor rate—and neither one of them is either an

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<sup>442</sup> This calculation differs slightly from the one Ghazzali gives in the *Revival*. The relevant passage in that book says that poor rate becomes obligatory only when the number of sheep reaches 40; then a ewe in her second year or a goat in its third year must be given. Nothing more accrues until the number of animals is 121, then two must be given. For two hundred, three; for 400, four. Thereafter, one for every one hundred.

unbeliever or a self-ransomed slave<sup>443</sup>—then the two are as though they were one proprietor. If they both have no more than forty, then half a sheep is required (from each owner); if they possess one hundred and twenty, both together, one sheep is sufficient.<sup>444</sup>

**THE SECOND KIND: THE POOR RATE OF TITHES.**<sup>445</sup> Whoever possesses 800 *manns*<sup>446</sup> of wheat, barley, currants or raisins, dates, or some other edible thing suitable for eating and is the food of a class (of people) upon which they can subsist, such as chickpeas, rice, beans, etc., giving tithes on it is obligatory. Things that are not (basic) comestibles, such as cotton, walnuts, linen, and fruit, are not subject to the poor rate. If one has 400 manns of wheat and 400 *manns* of barley, they are not subject to the tithe, for eligibility to pay the poor rate must be from one kind of goods.

If there is no water (for cultivation) from a canal or an underground channel, and water is instead drawn from a well by buckets, then one half of one tenth is necessary.<sup>447</sup> It is not proper to give it for grapes and fresh dates; however, it is for raisins and (mature) dates, unless raisins are not made from such grapes. In that case, the tithe is lawful. It is necessary when the grapes have taken on their color and the wheat and barley kernels have hardened that they not be disposed of until they have first been appraised in order to find out how much the share of the poor will be. Then, after the amount has been made known and agreed upon, it is lawful to dispose of them all.

**THE THIRD KIND: THE POOR RATE FOR GOLD AND SILVER.** For every 200 drams of silver, five *dirams*<sup>448</sup> are required at the end of the year. For every twenty dinars, half a dinar: that is one tenth of one fourth.<sup>449</sup> Whatever is over this is calculated the same way. For silver, for golden and silver swords,<sup>450</sup> and for ornaments made of gold and silver on swords, animal harnesses, etc., and everything that is not permissible,

<sup>443</sup> “a self-ransomed slave: (*mukātab*): a slave or bondman who has made an agreement with his master to work at some enterprise and gradually purchase his freedom.

<sup>444</sup> Ghazzali, in the equivalent passage in *The Revival*, states that the poor rate for two owners who own a flock jointly is the same as for one owner with respect to the rules of the poor rate. If they jointly own forty sheep, they must give own; if three persons own a flock of 120 sheep, each must give a sheep.

<sup>445</sup> Tithes (*mu<sup>c</sup>ashsharāt*): literally one tenth; that is, a 10% tax.

<sup>446</sup> See Note 329 above.

<sup>447</sup> That is, the tax is 5%.

<sup>448</sup> *diram* (dram): A weight that in Persia was, for example, one four-hundredth of a *mann*. (See Note 329 above.) In modern times, it is the equivalent of a gram.

<sup>449</sup> That is, the tax is one fortieth, or 2.5%.

<sup>450</sup> “swords” (*khanūr*, also *khunūr* or *khunnūr*): AA in a footnote says this means ‘swords.’ Steingass gives additional meanings, including ‘utensils, knives, pots, etc.,’ plus other meanings referring to non-metallic things.

the poor rate must be paid. However, ornaments which are—for a man or a woman—permissible to use are not subject to the poor rate. If one has gold and silver lent out to people that could be called in if one wished, it is subject to the poor rate.

**THE FOURTH KIND: THE POOR RATE ON TRADE.** If something is bought in the amount of twenty dinars, with the intention of trade, and the year ends, the cash poor rate becomes obligatory, and whatever profit has been made during the year is counted. At the end of every year, one must assess the value of the goods. Then, if the capital was originally gold or silver, (the poor rate) must be given in that form. If the goods were bought with cash, it should be paid in the coin most commonly used in the city.<sup>451</sup> If one has goods and intends to trade them, but does not buy anything with them, they are not counted at the beginning of the year. Whenever during the year the intention to trade is rescinded, the poor rate need not be paid. However, if it is cash and the person qualifies for paying the poor rate, the beginning of the (fiscal) year is calculated from the time when he becomes eligible to pay the poor rate.

**THE FIFTH KIND: THE POOR RATE OF THE 'ID FESTIVAL.** Every Muslim who, on the eve of the ('Id) Festival has more food than he himself or his family will consume during that day,<sup>452</sup> and has something in excess—not counting the house, clothing and necessities—must give a *sā*<sup>453</sup> of foodstuffs of the kind that are his usual food. That is, three *manns* less one-third of a *mann*. If (one's staple food) is wheat, barley is not suitable. If it is of a kind of grain, it should be of the best kind. Flour, etc., should not be given in place of wheat grain, according to Shafi'i (R). This poor rate must be given for every person for whom thou providest (their) expenditure, such as women, children, parents, and bondmen. The 'Id poor rate for bondmen is joint; two are counted as one. One does not need to pay a poor rate for an unbelieving bondman. If a

<sup>451</sup> In this period, coinage was not a monopoly of the central government as it is today. Although there were letters of credit and other banking instruments, daily trade was conducted with coins, usually of copper, silver, and gold. These were issued by kings, governors, warlords and lacked standard weight and purity. Some coinages had a better reputation for purity than others. There was also considerable counterfeiting and adulteration. Coin clipping was also common. Certain coins were favored in one district but not in another. Recognizing this situation, Ghazzali does not declare a single standard, but leaves it to the custom of the place. Incidentally, for nearly two centuries prior to the oil era, the standard coin, because of its reputation and recognizability, in much of the Middle East was Austrian Maria Theresa dollar rather than any local issue.

<sup>452</sup> That is, for the day commencing with the final breaking of the fast of Ramadan (*iftār*) and the festival following it. The first day of Shawwāl.

<sup>453</sup> *sā*: a dry measure given various values. Steingass makes it the equivalent of five and one-third *ratl*, with each *ratl* the equivalent of a pint.

woman wishes to pay her own poor rate from her own property, it is lawful. If the husband pays it without her directive, it is lawful.

This much of the rules of the poor rate must be learned. If some other circumstance occurs, one ought to know that he must ask about it and do so.

### THE MANNER OF GIVING THE POOR RATE

Know that one must observe five things in giving the poor rate:

*FIRST:* The declaration of the Intention of the poor rate is a religious obligation. If one is appointing some one else to do this, at the time of the appointment, the Intention must be stated, or the representative must be instructed to declare the Intention at the time of its distribution. When the guardian of the property of an infant pays the poor rate on it, he should declare the Intention.

*SECOND:* When the year is ended, one should hasten; inexcusable delay is not seemly. The poor rate for the 'Id Festival should not be delayed and hurrying to do so during the month of Ramadan is lawful, but not before (the commencement of Ramadan). Pre-paying the poor rate on property is meritorious during the entire year, with the condition that the recipient of the payment remains poor until the end of the year. If the recipient dies before the completion of the year, or becomes solvent, or apostatizes, that payment must be made up.

*THIRD:* The poor rate must be paid of the same kind as the thing assessed. According to the Shafi 'ite school, it is not correct to give gold in place of silver, wheat in place of barley, or anything else of an equivalent value.<sup>454</sup>

*FOURTH:* Charity should be given where the property is, where the poor can see the property. If (charity) is given to a different city, the correct view is that the obligation of the poor rate upon that donor is not reduced (by the gift).

*FIFTH:* The poor rate should be divided among eight categories of people, however many there are, so that each group is not less than three and the total is twenty-four. If the poor rate is one *diram*, according to the Shafi 'ite school, it should be divided into eight equal parts. Then each part is divided among the persons of the category as they wish, even if it is not equal.

In these days, three of those (eight) categories (of poor rate recipients) are uncommon: the warriors for the faith, those who are to be reconciled, and the collectors. But the poor, the destitute, the captives to

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<sup>454</sup> That is, if the wealth which serves as the basis of the poor rate assessment is gold, it must be paid in gold; if it is wheat, it must be paid in wheat. The equivalent value in some other form or of some other kind is not acceptable.

be ransomed, the wayfarers, and the debtors can be found.<sup>455</sup> According to Shafi'i, each person should give the poor rate to at least fifteen individuals.

In the Shafi'ite school, there are two difficult problems: one is that substitution (of one kind of goods for another) is not permitted, and the other is that it must be distributed among all (qualified recipients). Most of the people follow the Hanafite school with respect to these two matters. We hope that that they will not be seized (for punishment on the Day of Resurrection) for this, *if God Most High wills it.*

### **DISCLOSING THESE PEOPLE: THEY ARE OF EIGHT CATEGORIES**

THE FIRST CATEGORY is the Poor. This is a person who possesses nothing and cannot do any business. If he has food for the day and clothing on his body, he is not poor. If he has no more than one half of his daily sustenance, or has a shirt but no turban, or has a turban but no shirt, then he is poor. If he can earn money with some tool, but does not have the tool, then he is poor. If he is a student who, if he were to engage in some trade, would be held back in his studies, he is poor. Such persons are not often found, except children. The solution is to seek out a poor family man and give him the portion of the poor on behalf of his children.

THE SECOND CATEGORY is the Destitute. Anyone whose basic expenditures are greater than his income is destitute. Even if he has a house and clothing, but does not have the expenses for a year and he cannot depend upon his earnings, it is lawful to give him enough to complete the year. If he has carpets, utensils, and household furnishings, because he has need of them, he is (still counted among the) destitute. If he has something in excess of his need, he is not destitute.

THE THIRD CATEGORY is the Collectors of the Poor Rate. They collected the poor rate and distribute it among the poor. Their salary is paid from the poor rate.

THE FOURTH CATEGORY is Those Who Are To Be Reconciled. This is a great person who embraces Islam if he is given property. Others will be encouraged to accept Islam by his example.

THE FIFTH CATEGORY is the Bondmen to be ransomed. These are bondmen who purchase their freedom by giving their price to their master.

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<sup>455</sup> The categories of the recipients of the poor rate are enumerated in the Q. 9:60. Extensive commentaries have been written about the exact meaning of these words and there are differences of interpretation and usage among the chief religious schools of Islam.

THE SIXTH CATEGORY is the Debtors: persons who have fallen into debt not by reason of vice and who are poor; or a person of means who has incurred debts for some good purpose to prevent social turmoil.

THE SEVENTH CATEGORY is the Warriors for the Defence of the Faith. These are warriors who do not receive payment from the public exchequer, even if they have wealth. They are given equipment from the poor rate funds.

THE EIGHTH CATEGORY is the Wayfarers. Travelers who do not have traveling provision, either passing through, or traveling from their own city, are given supplies and rent. It is lawful to accept the word of any person who declares "I am a pauper" or "I am needy," for one cannot be certain that he is lying. However, if the traveler or the warrior does not travel or go to battle, then the poor rate should be taken back from him. The other categories must be validated by the word of trustworthy persons.

#### THE INMOST SECRETS OF GIVING THE POOR RATE

Know that just as formal prayer has an external form and an inner reality that is the spirit of that form, so does the poor rate. If a person does not comprehend the inner mystery and the true nature of the poor rate, it is a spiritless form for him. Its secret lies in three things:

*THE FIRST (SECRET)* is that the people are commanded to the love and friendship of God Most High and there is no believer who does not claim this. Indeed, they are commanded not to love anyone more than God Most High, as is said in the Honorable Quran: *Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kinsfolk and the wealth ye have acquired, and trade whose dullness ye fear, and dwellings ye love, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till God brings His command to pass. And God guides not the transgressing people.* (Q. 9:24)

There is no believer who does not claim that he loves God Most High above all other things, and he supposes (to himself) that that is so. Therefore, there is a sign and a proof needed lest everyone take pride in an empty boast. So, since property is one of the things loved by man, he is tested with it and it is said: "If thou speak the truth in thy claim of love, sacrifice this one of thy beloved things so that thou may understand the level of thy love for God Most High."

The persons, then, who have learned this secret, are of three classes:

The First Class was the truly righteous, who sacrificed all that they possessed and said: "We give for the love of God Most High."

Others gave half of their possessions. When Abu Bakr<sup>456</sup> (R) brought all of his wealth, the Messenger (S) said: "What hast thou left for thy family?" He answered: "God and the Messenger of God." 'Umar (R) brought half of his wealth. The Messenger (S) asked: "What hast thou left for thy family?" He said: "As much as I have brought." The Messenger (S) said: "*The difference between you two is like the difference between your words.*"

The Second Class was the benevolent who did not spend all of their wealth at one time, as they did not have the power to do so. They kept their (property) and waited for the need of the poor and the payments of charity. They kept themselves the same as the poor. They did not stint in the amount of the poor rate, but when they came upon the poor, they treated them as though they were their own family.

The Third Class was that of the good, sound men who did not have the ability to pay more than five dirhams out of 200 dirhams. They contented themselves with their religious obligation and observed the command of God joyfully and promptly. They did not humble the poor when distributing the poor rate alms. This is the lowest degree, for anyone whose soul (*dil*) does not permit him to give five dirhams out of the two hundred which God gave to him, has no part in the love for God. Since he cannot give more than this, his love is very weak and he is counted among the miserly devotees.

*THE SECOND SECRET* is the purification of the soul from its miserliness and pollution. Miserliness in the soul is like a religious impurity that causes it to be unsuitable for approaching God Most High, just as an external impurity causes the body to be unsuitable for the presence of prayer. This impurity of miserliness will not be cleansed except by spending wealth. Because of this, the poor rate removes the impurity of miserliness as water washes the (external) impurities. And, it is for this reason that the poor rate and voluntary alms are forbidden to the Messenger (S) and his household, in order to protect his position from the dirt of the peoples' property.

*THE THIRD SECRET* is that the gratitude for the blessing that property is a blessing for the believers, the cause of their ease in this world and the next. Just as formal prayer, the Pilgrimage, and fasting are the gratitude for the blessings of the body, the poor rate is the gratitude for the blessing of property, so that when one finds himself self-sufficient with these blessings, and sees another Muslim, like himself, in need, he says to himself: "He is a servant of God Most High like me. I am

<sup>456</sup> Abū Bakr: The first of the Rightly Guided caliphs, rgd. from AH11/632CE to AH13/634CE. He was the father of 'Ayishah (see Note 393). He was the only one of the four Rightly Guided caliphs to die a natural death.

thankful that He has made me unneedful of him and made him needful of me. Let me befriend him. It may be that this is a test; if I stint, I may be changed into his condition, and he into mine."

Therefore, everyone must know these secrets of the poor rate so that his poor rate not be an empty form.

### THE RULES AND DETAILS OF GIVING THE POOR RATE

If a person desires that his worship be living and not spiritless, and that his spiritual reward be multiplied, then he must observe seven duties:

*THE FIRST DUTY:* This is to hasten in giving the poor rate, before it falls due, by giving it throughout the year. In this, there are three benefits:

One is that the eagerness to worship may appear (in the donor), for giving after it is obligatory is a necessity, because if one does not give, he will be chastised (in the Hereafter). Therefore, that payment will be made out of fear, not out of love. There will be with him that which comes from fear, not from love and compassion.

The second is that happiness may touch the souls of the poor early so that they supplicate for one with more sincerity because they see the happiness unexpectedly. And the supplications of the poor are a walled fortress against all calamities (for the donor).

The third is that one may be secure from the impediments of fortune, for there are many calamities in delaying. It may be that some impediment befall him, depriving him of this benefit.<sup>457</sup> When the soul conceives an eagerness for something, one should seize the opportunity, for that is the view of mercy. Be quick, lest Satan attack! *For the heart of the believer is between two fingers of the fingers of the Compassionate One.*

The thought occurred to one of the saints, while in the privy, to give his shirt to some poor person. He called his disciple, took off his shirt, and gave it to him. The disciple said: "O shaykh! Why didst thou not wait until thou camest out (of the privy)?" He replied: "I was afraid that some other impulse would occur to me and prevent me from doing this."

*THE SECOND DUTY:* If one wishes to pay the poor rate in one lump sum, one should give it either in the month of Muharram<sup>458</sup> which

<sup>457</sup> By making him unable to pay the poor rate and obtain its spiritual reward.

<sup>458</sup> Muharram is the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The lunar year gains about ten or eleven days on the solar year every year, so the dates vary. In the year 2001CE, for example, Muharram AH1422 began on the 26th of March. Twelve years earlier, in 1989CE, it began on the 2nd of August.

is the first of the year and a sacred month, or in the month of Ramadan.<sup>459</sup> However much the occasion is nobler, so the spiritual reward is increased. The Messenger (S) was the most generous of mankind; he gave away whatever he had. At the month Ramadan, he did not keep back anything and gave all of it away.

**THE THIRD DUTY:** The poor rate should be given privately and not in public in order to avoid hypocrisy. In the Traditions, it is related: "Secret almsgiving quells the wrath of God Most High." In another Tradition: "Seven persons will be in the shade of the Throne of God tomorrow: one is the just ruler, another is the person gives alms with the right hand, giving in such a way that the left hand does not know of it."<sup>460</sup> See what his status is; that he is at the level of the just ruler!"

And in the Traditions, it is related: "Whoever gives alms in secret, (the alms) are written among the secret deeds; if they are given in public, then they are written among the public deeds. If the donor says to another: 'I gave such-and-such alms,' then the deed is taken out of the records of secret and public deeds and written in the record of hypocrisy."

For this reason the forefathers surpassed themselves in giving alms in secret to the point that there was one who would seek out a blind person and place the alms in his hand without speaking, lest the blind person recognize his voice. Another would look for a sleeping pauper and tie the alms to the man's clothing so that he would find them when he awoke and not know who had given them to him. There was another who threw them in the path the poor were taking. Another would give the alms to a representative who would then distribute them.

All this they did so that the poor would not know (their benefactor)! Yet, they considered keeping their deeds secret from others even more important, for giving in public may lead to hypocrisy; even as miserliness is defeated<sup>461</sup> in the soul, hypocrisy is nourished. These traits are all destroyers. Miserliness is as a scorpion in the grave and hypocrisy is as a snake, which is stronger because they make the scorpion the food of the snake in order to strengthen the snake. One is saved from one destructive force to fall into another that is more difficult. The bite of this on the soul, when in the grave, will be as the bites of snakes and

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<sup>459</sup> Ramadān is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and the month of fasting. See previous Note.

<sup>460</sup> Compare these words attributed to Jesus: "But when thou givest alms, let not thy left hand know what the right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:3.

<sup>461</sup> The remedy for miserliness is to give things away. See above.

scorpions, as we found in the Prolegomena.<sup>462</sup> Therefore, the harm of giving (alms) in public is greater than its benefit.

**THE FOURTH DUTY:** (For one who) is secure from hypocrisy, and has cleansed it from his soul—such a person knows that if he gives in public, others will imitate him and their desire (to give) will increase—for such a person, giving in public is better and more virtuous. This person must be one to whom praise and censure are equal, one who is proficient in the knowledge of God Most High.

**THE FIFTH DUTY:** That is that one not invalidate the charity with obligation or troubling. *God Most High said: Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury.* (Q. 2:264) This refers to injuring the poor with sour looks, knitting the brows, or speaking harshly to them, questioning them rudely, and looking upon them with contempt because of their poverty. This (attitude) arises from two kinds of ignorance and foolishness:

One is that it is hard for some to give up property. For this reason, they are stingy and speak roughly. Whoever finds it difficult to give one dirham to receive a thousand is ignorant. By (giving) this poor rate, he will obtain the highest heaven and the pleasure of God Most High and redeem himself from hell. Why is this difficult for him if he believes in these things?

The other is the foolishness that a person suppose he is nobler than the pauper is because of his wealth. He does not know that a person (the pauper) who will go to heaven five hundred years before he does is nobler than he and his status much greater! To God Most High, the poor have dignity and nobility, not the rich! The sign of their nobility in this world is that while the rich man busies himself with work, worldly concerns, and their burdens and calamities, his portion of such things is not greater than the amount of his need, and it is incumbent upon him to supply the needs of the poor! So, in truth, the rich man has been made the forced laborer of the poor man in this world, and in the next, the poor have been allotted five hundred years to await (the rich man's) arrival!

**THE SIXTH DUTY:** This is not to impose an obligation. The root of obligation is ignorance, and that is an attribute of the soul. It is to do some good deed for the poor and given them something from his own blessings, and (thus) to put the poor under his control. Then, if he thinks this way, its sign is that he expects the poor person to serve him and wait upon him, and to greet him first. In sum, he expects much respect and deference. If the poor person is deficient in this, he is more amazed at

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<sup>462</sup> See the Fourth Topic of the Prolegomena.

this than he was before. It may be that he says: "What (wrong) have I done to him?"

All of this is from ignorance. Indeed, the truth is that the pauper did him a service by accepting his alms so that he may escape the fire of hell and his soul be cleansed of the impurity of miserliness. If a copper<sup>463</sup> cups him without payment, he would be put under an obligation to (the copper), for he let out that blood which could have been the cause of his death. Since he has received both purification and salvation because of the poor person, he should put himself under obligation to him!

Also, the Messenger (S) says: "Alms first fall into the hand of God Most High; then, into the hand of the poor person." Since one gives to God Most High and the pauper is the representative of God Most High on His behalf, (the giver) must feel grateful to the poor person, and not expect gratitude from him. When one becomes informed of these three inner secrets of the secrets of the poor rate and reflects upon them, one knows that the imposition of an obligation is ignorance.

The forefathers went to great lengths to avoid doing this. They stood before the poor person and placed it before him humbly. Then they begged him, saying: "Accept this from me." There are some who held it in front of them in their hands so that the pauper would take the coin from their hands. Thus, the pauper's hand was above theirs, for *the upper hand is better than the lower hand*. It is not fitting for a person to impose an obligation.

Ayishah (R) and Umm Salamah<sup>464</sup> (R) would send something to a poor person, and would say: "Memorize what supplication he utters"; so that they could give a reward<sup>465</sup> of a supplication for every supplication, this so that the alms would remain unrewarded.<sup>466</sup> Nor did

<sup>463</sup> See Note 300 above.

<sup>464</sup> Umm Salamah: A wife of the Prophet. She and her first husband, Abu Salamah, were early converts to Islam and emigrated to Ethiopia due to the persecution by the Quraysh. There they had a son, whom they named Salamah. Then, they left Ethiopia and emigrated to Madinah where they had three more children. Her journey alone from Makkah to Madinah with her small child is well known. A non-believer, 'Uthman bin Talhah, happened to meet her on the road and, thinking that a woman should not travel alone such a long distance, escorted her courteously to Madinah. Abu Salamah was wounded at the battle of Uhud and later died in AH4/624CE. The Prophet was 57 years old when he contracted this marriage with the widow.

<sup>465</sup> "reward": the text has *mukâfât*, which in modern Persian usually implies retaliation and retribution; quid pro quo. In Arabic, however, and Ghazzali seems to be using it in the Arabic sense, it means 'reward, gratification.'

<sup>466</sup> That is, the supplication (*dú'â*) of the poor person on their behalf would have nullified the spiritual reward of the charity, so they would ask the person charged to distribute the charity to memorize the words of supplication that the receiver would utter. Then they would supplicate on his behalf to balance that so that the charity would remain untainted by an expression of gratitude from the receiver. The poor man's supplication on their behalf was occasioned by receiving the alms; in the view of 'Ayishah and Umm Salamah

they not hold the eagerness for supplication by the poor man proper so that he suppose that they had done the good deed (for that). The doer of the good deed is in fact the pauper who has taken this burden from thee.

**THE SEVENTH DUTY:** One should give from the best, most lawful, and most appealing part of one's property; for, that which is doubtful is not fit for nearness (to God). God Most High is pure and does not accept anything other than the pure. *God Most High said: And seek not of the bad to spend thereof (in charity) when ye would not take it for yourselves, save with disdain.* (Q. 2:267) That is: Why do ye spend as the portion of God Most High that thing which ye would accept with repugnance? If a person places the worst he has in his home before the poor man, he slighted him. How can it be that one gives the worst to his Lord and the best to His servants?<sup>467</sup> The worst kind of giving is to give with aversion. Alms given without joy, it is feared, will not be accepted. The Messenger (S) says: "In almsgiving, it is possible for one dirham to take precedence over a thousand dirhams." It is that which is given of the best and given with joy.

#### THE RULES FOR SEEKING OUT A POOR PERSON

Know that when one gives the alms of the poor rate to any poor Muslim, he is fulfilling a religious obligation; but a person who is doing the business of the Hereafter should not stint in making the effort (to find a suitable recipient). The spiritual reward for the properly distributed charity is multiplied, so one should watch for (at least) one of these five characteristics:

**THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC:** The one who is abstinent and pious. *The Prophet (S) said: "Feed the pious."* The reason for this is that they are aided by what they receive in their devotion to God, and the donor is a partner in the spiritual reward of that (devotion) which he has aided.

A great and wealthy person would not give alms except to the Sufis. He used to say: "These are a people who have no ambition other than God Most High. When they are in need of something, they are distracted (from Him). And I, when I take my soul to the Divine Presence, I would prefer (them) to the attention of a hundred souls whose ambition is the world." These words were related to Junayd<sup>468</sup> who said:

his doing this was a kind of tacit obligation upon them which they remedied by supplicating on his behalf.

<sup>467</sup> "His servants": i.e., mankind, the people he would seek to impress.

<sup>468</sup> Junayd: Abu al-Qasim bin Muhammad bin al-Junayd. He came from Nahavand in western Iran and began his career as a silk spinner. He went to Baghdad and became a

"This it the speech of one of God's saints." The man was a grocer and he had become penniless, because he had given away everything that he possessed. He would give the Sufis whatever they asked and not seek payment. Junayd sent the man some goods so that he might return to his trade, saying: "For a man such as thee, trade has no loss."

**THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC:** The one who is one of the learned. He obtains the leisure to study by means of the alms. The giver shares the spiritual reward of knowledge.

**THE THIRD CHARACTERISTIC:** The one who conceals his need. He hides his own poverty and lives with the appearance of affluence: *The ignorant think (they are) rich because of their restraint.* (Q. 2:273) These are a people who keep the veil of the appearance of prosperity over their faces. It is not as though thou give to a pauper who is not afraid to beg.

**THE FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC:** The one who has a family or is ill. However much the need be greater, the greater is the spiritual reward (of giving to him).

**THE FIFTH CHARACTERISTIC:** The one who is a relative; (giving to him) is both a present and alms, and the person who is held as a brother in the love of God Most High—he, too, is of the degree of the relatives.

If one finds a person possessing all of these qualities—or more—he takes precedence. When one bestows upon such persons, their high desires and thoughts and their supplications become one's fortress. This is a benefit beyond that which is the expulsion of miserliness from oneself and the giving of thanks for one's blessings. And one must not give the poor rate to 'Alawis,<sup>469</sup> nor to unbelievers, for this is soiling the people's wealth. The 'Alawi is vexed by this and (giving) this [charity]<sup>470</sup> to an unbeliever is repugnant.

#### THE RULES FOR THE RECIPIENT OF THE POOR RATE

The recipient of the alms must observe five duties:

**THE FIRST DUTY:** He must know that since God Most High created His servants in need of goods, for that reason He did not place a great deal of property in their hands. However, He favored a group and protected from the activities and concerns of the world. He placed the burden of the pain and trouble of the business of the world and its

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famous Sufi theologian and jurist. He performed the Pilgrimage thirty times and died in AH297/910CE.

<sup>469</sup> 'Alawis ('Alawīyān): that is, descendants of the Prophet. The poor rate is not given to descendants of the Prophet.

<sup>470</sup> From the AA text.

preservation upon the powerful. He commanded them to care for those of His more beloved servants according to their needs, so that those precious ones could escape the burden of the world and might be of one mind and thought in their devotion to God Most High.

Since by reason of (physical) needs they would become distracted, in accordance with their needs, they are supplied by the powerful so that the blessedness of their supplications and resolution may be an atonement for the powerful. Consequently, the poor person must receive that which he receives with the intention of using it for his self-sufficiency so that he may be free for devotion (to God). He must recognize the value of the blessing which the powerful have given him as a kind of impressionment fee, so that he attend to worship.

This is just as the kings of the world, not wanting their own personal (male) servants<sup>471</sup> to absent themselves from their service, do not permit them to engage in any worldly trade. They turn the villagers and the traders of the marketplace who are not fit to be their servants into their corvée<sup>472</sup> so that they (the kings) may receive from them the tolls and taxes imposed upon their activities and pay their personal servants. As the aim of the property (taken) from all is its use by a special class, the aim of God Most High from all mankind is the worship of the Divine Presence.

For this reason, He said: *I did not create jinn and mankind except that they worship (Me).* (Q. 51:56) So, the poor person must accept everything he receives with this intention. For this the Messenger (S) said: "The wage of the giver is not greater than the wage of the taker, for (the recipient) takes out of need." This is the person whose purpose is the freedom from care for religion.

**THE SECOND DUTY:** The recipient receives it as from God most High and views it as from Him. He recognizes the wealthy donor as one utilized (by God) on his behalf, one who has been compelled to deliver it to him by means of (His) agent. His agent is the belief that has been given to him so that he might know that his salvation and happiness are bound up in (giving) charity. If he did not have this agent, he would not give a single grain to anyone. Therefore, (the recipient) should be grateful to Him who has obliged the agent. As (the recipient) knows that the hand of the rich giver is a means, he must view him as the medium and give thanks: *Whoever does not thank people has not thanked God.* For God Most High, as He is the Creator of the deeds of His servants,

<sup>471</sup> "servants" (*ghulāmān*): or "bondmen, slaves." This term only refers to males, usually young. In Arabic, it means "boy, youth, slave, servant." The root *gh*, *l*, *m* can also have sexual overtones.

<sup>472</sup> "corvee" (*sukhrāh*): "forced labor, unpaid labor." The kings do not pay their subjects; rather, they levy taxes and fees upon them in order to support their rule over them.

always lauds them and thanks them, just as He said: *How excellent a servant he was; lo! he was ever turning (to Us) (Q. 38:44)*<sup>473</sup> And He said: *Surely he was a truthful man, a prophet; (Q. 19:41),*<sup>474</sup> and the like, because whoever has been turned into the means of goodness, has been made dear. As He said: *There is blessedness for him whom I have created for goodness and I have caused goodness to flow on his hands.*

So, one must know the value of His dear ones, and this is the meaning of gratitude. One must make a supplication for him and say: *May God purify thy heart in the hearts of the godly and increase thy work in the works of good deeds; may He bless thy soul amongst the souls of the martyrs.*

In the Traditions, it is related: “Recompense everyone who does a good deed for thee. If thou art unable, then offer supplication to God on his behalf to fulfill the (obligation of) recompense. The perfection of gratitude is to conceal a defect in the alms and not to consider its meagerness as meagerness, nor to think it mean; just as the prerequisite of the giver is that he give, and even if it should be much, he must consider it unworthy and not magnify it.

**THE THIRD DUTY:** One should not accept anything that is not lawful. One should not accept anything from the property of oppressors. One should be wary of the property of usurers.

**THE FOURTH DUTY:** One should not accept more than one needs. If one accepts it for a journey, one should not take more than is necessary for one's provisions and lodging. If one is a debtor, he should not accept more than the debt. If it is for his family's sustenance, it should not be more than ten dirhams; one should not accept eleven dirhams, as that one (extra) dirham is unlawful. If there is something in the house of furnishings and clothing in excess (of need), it is not proper to accept the poor rate alms.

**THE FIFTH DUTY:** If the giver of the poor rate is not knowledgeable about the source of the portion he is giving, (the recipient) should ask: “Is this which thou art giving from the portion of poor or from the portion of the debtors?”<sup>475</sup> For example, if the recipient is not of that characteristic, and (the donor) gives the amount of the eighth of his poor rate to him, he should not accept it. According to the school of Shafi'i (R), the whole amount cannot be given to one person.

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<sup>473</sup> In this particular citation from the Quran, the servant referred to is Job.

<sup>474</sup> This refers to Abraham.

<sup>475</sup> See the section above in this chapter entitled: “Rules for Seeking Out a Poor Person.” The question here is about which category the alms are being given from and whether the recipient is qualified to accept them.

### THE MERIT OF GIVING ALMS

The Messenger (S) said: "Give alms, even if all of it is but a date, for that will keep a poor man alive and slay sins as water extinguishes fire." And he said: "Take heed of hell; if it is all (but) half a date, so be it. If thou canst not (give that), then (give) a kind word." And he said: "No Muslim gives alms of what is lawful but that God Most High takes it in His Own gracious Hand. He nurtures it as thou nurturest thine own animals until the time that that date becomes as large as Mount Uhud."<sup>476</sup> And he said: "At the Resurrection everyone will be beneath the shade of his own alms until the time when judgment is made among created beings." And he said: "Almsgiving shuts seventy of the doors of evil." He was asked: "Which alms are more meritorious?" He answered: "Those which thou givest in health, for thou hast the expectation to live on and do not fear poverty; not those thou delayest until thy soul reaches thy throat"<sup>477</sup> and then say: 'This to this person, that to that person,' for that will belong to that other person,'—whether thou sayest it (in words) or sayest it not (in words)."<sup>478</sup>

Jesus (A) said: "Angels will not come to the house of whoever disappoints a beggar and drives him away from its door for seven days." The Messenger (S) did not delegate tasks to others; rather, he would do them with his own hands. He would give alms to the needy with his own hand, and he would place the water of purification himself at night and keep it covered. And he (S) said: "Whoever clothes a Muslim, (the clothing) is kept by God Most High so that it will become like a cloak on him."

'Ayishah (R) gave fifty thousand dirhams in charity and wore a patched, mended tunic. She did not make a tunic for herself. Ibn Mas'ud (R) says: "A man worshipped God for seventy years, then he committed a great sin which voided all of that worship. Then, he passed by a poor man and gave him a round loaf of bread. He was forgiven for his sin and the deeds of seventy years of his obedience were restored to him." Luqman<sup>479</sup> said to a boy: "Whenever thou committest a sin, give alms."

<sup>476</sup> Mount Uhud: A small mountain about three miles north of Madinah. It is famous as the site of a battle (AH3/625CE) in which the Muslims, who had disobeyed the orders of the Prophet, were defeated by the Quraysh.

<sup>477</sup> That is, you are about to die.

<sup>478</sup> That is, after death it will be someone else's property anyway.

<sup>479</sup> Luqman: *Luqmān al-Hakim*, in the Quran (Q. 31:1-19) one upon whom God had bestowed knowledge. Muslim commentators are not unanimous as to whether he was a prophet or not. Western scholars have often identified him with Aesop, the putative author of a Greek collection of fables and moral tales. Aesop is not a proper name, but means "the Ethiope," indicating an African origin. Other identifications have been proposed, but *Allāh a'lam*—God knows best. The problem of Luqman is discussed in the translator's *The Old Testament: An Islamic Perspective*. The text of the discussion is also

'Abdullah bin 'Umar<sup>480</sup> used to give large amounts of sugar in alms and would say: "God Most High says: *Ye will not attain piety until ye spend of that which ye love.* (Q. 3:92) And I love sugar." Sufyan Thawri says: "The alms of whoever does not consider himself more in need of the spiritual reward of the alms than the poor person needs the alms are not acceptable." Hasan Basri saw a beautiful girl with a slave dealer and said: "Wilt thou sell her for two dirhams?" The other replied: "No." Hasan said: "Go, for God Most High sells the women of Paradise for two kernels of grain, and they are more beautiful than she." He meant alms.

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found in *From Monarchy to Hellenism in The Bible: An Islamic Perspective* series.  
extracted from the former volume. (See list on p. iv.)

<sup>480</sup> 'Abdullah bin 'Umar: See Ibn 'Umar.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCERNING FASTING AND ITS RULES

Know that fasting<sup>481</sup> is one of the Pillars of Islam. The Messenger (S) stated that God Most High says: "For every good deed, I compensate tenfold, up to seven hundred,<sup>482</sup> except the fast which is particular to Me. I shall give the reward for that." And God Most High says: *Verily, the patient will be paid their wages without stint.* (Q. 39:10) The wages of those who are patient with respect to their own carnal appetites do not come under any accounting or valuation; rather, they exceed all limits. And (the Messenger) (S) said: "The odor from the mouth of the one who fasts is more fragrant to God Most High than the scent of musk." And God Most High says: "My servant has abandoned food, drink, and his own carnal appetite for Me, especially, and I am able to give him his compensation." And (the Messenger) (S) said: "The sleep of the faster is worship." And he said: "When the moon of Ramadan appears, the gates of heaven are flung open, the gates of hell are shut fast, and the devils are bound with chains. A herald cries: 'O seeker of goodness, come, for this is thy moment! O seeker of evil, desist, for this is not thy place.'"

Among the greatness of the virtues (of fasting) is that He made this act of worship for Himself and said: *The fasting is for Me and I shall reward him, even though all forms of worship are His, just as He calls the Ka'bah His House, even though all of the universe is His kingdom.* Fasting has two special qualities that make it deserving of this relationship:

One is that its true nature is in not-doing (something) and refraining (from something). This is internal and hidden from eyes. There can be no hypocrisy in it, for the intention is made at night.

The other is that it is a victory over Iblis,<sup>483</sup> the enemy of God Most High, for his armies are the carnal appetites, and fasting defeats his armies, because its true nature is the abandonment of the appetites. About this, the Messenger (S) said: "Satan flows about inside a person as blood does in the body. Thou must make his passage difficult with hunger."

(The Messenger) said to 'Ayishah (R): "Do not cease pounding the gate of heaven." She asked: "With what thing?" He said: "With fasting." That is, with the hunger of fasting. He also said: "*Fasting is a shield.*" All of this is because the carnal appetites are obstacles in acts of

<sup>481</sup> *Rūzah* is the Persian word for fasting. The Arabic is *sawm*.

<sup>482</sup> "up to seven hundred": AA omits this phrase.

<sup>483</sup> Iblis: a name of Satan used in the Quran and Islamic literature (in addition to Satan (*Shayṭān*), which is used in Arabic much as we use "the devil" in English).

worship and the helper of the appetite is satiety, but hunger shatters the appetites.

### THE RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS OF FASTING

Know that there are six religious obligations with respect to fasting:

*THE FIRST OBLIGATION* is to seek the first of the month of Ramadan in order that it may be known whether it is to be (a month of) twenty-nine (days) or thirty. Accepting the word (about the sighting of the moon) from one just person is lawful. For the (sighting of the moon of) the Festival,<sup>484</sup> there should be at least two (just persons). Whoever hears (about it) from some reliable person whom he knows to be truthful becomes obligated to fast, even if a judge has not decided about (the reliability) of (that witness's) word. If (the moon) has been sighted in another city more than of sixteen parasangs<sup>485</sup> distant, then the fast does not become obligatory;<sup>486</sup> but if it is nearer, it does.

*THE SECOND OBLIGATION* is the declaration of the Intention to fast. This must be done every night, and one should declare that this is the fast of Ramadan, a religious obligation, and the timely performance<sup>487</sup> (of that obligation). The soul of any Muslim who recites this will not be devoid of the Intention.

On the Night of Doubt,<sup>488</sup> if one says: "I make the intention to fast if tomorrow is the (beginning of) the month of Ramadan," this is not

<sup>484</sup> "the moon of the Festival": that is, the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast (*'Id ul-Fitr*) which commences on the first of the month of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The festival may last several days, although the special 'Id congregational formal prayer is held on the first day.

<sup>485</sup> Parasang: a measure of distance equal to about six kilometers, or approximately four miles. It was originally the distance foot soldiers were expect to travel in one hour over relatively smooth terrain. Sixteen parasangs would be a bit less than 100 kilometers, or a bit more than 60 miles.

<sup>486</sup> "does not become obligatory": that is, until determined locally. With modern communications, it has become the custom to determine the first day on a national or provincial basis, but there are still places that decide locally.

<sup>487</sup> "timely performance" (*adā*): That is, the fast—or any other spiritual obligation, such as obligatory prayer—is to be performed at the proper time. This is in opposition to *qadā*, or the delayed or make-up performance of a spiritual obligation because of illness, travel, or some other reason which prevents one from performing it at the correct time. In this case, the fast of Ramadan is being observed during the month of Ramadan, not some other, different time because of unfavorable circumstances.

<sup>488</sup> The Night of Doubt (*shab-i shakk*): The 31st of the month of Sha'ban, the month that precedes Ramadan. In the Islamic lunar calendar, months have either 29 or 30 days. Because the lunar sightings upon which these calendars are calculated are occasionally deficient due to bad weather, dust, etc., it sometimes happens that the moon is not

correct until the time when the doubt is removed by the word of some reliable person. However, on the last day of Ramadan, it is lawful, even if there is doubt. For the reality is that Ramadan has not yet been completed.

If a person is restrained in some dark place and he determines the time by thought and personal decision, and he is confident about that, it is lawful.<sup>489</sup> If one declares the Intention at night to eat something, the intention is not nullified; indeed, if (a woman) knows that her menstrual discharge will end, she declares the intention and the discharge ends, (her) fast is valid.

*THE THIRD OBLIGATION* is that nothing should enter the interior (of the body) deliberately and on purpose (while fasting); however, cupping, applying kohl to the eyes, inserting a stick in the ear, or cotton in the urethra are not detrimental (to the fast), for the "interior" is a receptacle, such as the nasal cavity, the stomach, the intestines, and the bladder. If something reaches the interior involuntarily such as a fly, the dust of the road, smoke, water from rinsing the mouth splashing against the palate, it does not affect (the fasting), unless the mouth-rinsing is excessive and water goes into the throat. If one absent-mindedly eats something, it does not break the fast. However, if in the morning or evening one should deliberately eat something and then learn that it was after the dawn or before the setting of the sun, the fast must be made up.

*THE FOURTH OBLIGATION* is that one must not have physical contact<sup>490</sup> with one's family.<sup>491</sup> If carried to the point where the greater ablution becomes obligatory, the fast is broken. However, if one has forgotten that it was a day of fasting, the fast is not broken. If one has intercourse at night<sup>492</sup> and performs the greater ablution after the dawn, (the fast) is valid.

*THE FIFTH OBLIGATION* is to not induce the ejaculation of semen by any means. If one is with one's own family, without the intention of having sexual intercourse, but one is young and in danger of ejaculation, should this occur, the fast is broken.

observed on the 30th night of Sha'ban. The following day may be the 31st of Sha'ban or the first of Ramadan, and there is a doubt about fasting that day.

<sup>489</sup> That is, the person cannot determine the time for beginning or ending the fast by observing the sun as people normally do.

<sup>490</sup> "physical contact" (*mubāsharat*): This can mean lying with the skin of one person touching the skin of another, or, euphemistically, sexual intercourse.

<sup>491</sup> Family, people (*ahl*): This is a euphemism for the women of the household. In Ghazzali's time, the term would have included wife or wives, concubines, etc.

<sup>492</sup> Sexual intercourse, along with eating and drinking are, of course, lawful during the nights of fasting. The strictures against these acts apply only during the daylight hours.

*THE SIXTH OBLIGATION* is one must not induce vomiting. If one vomits involuntarily, the fast is not broken. If because of a head cold or for some other cause, one expectorates congealed phlegm from the throat, it does not affect the fasting; for avoiding this is difficult, but if, when it reaches the mouth one swallows it back down, the fast is broken.

### THE PRACTICES (OF THE PROPHET) ARE ALSO SIX

(These are) delaying the pre-dawn meal and hastening to break the fast with dates or water before the obligatory formal prayer; holding a tooth-brushing stick after the sun begins to decline (in the afternoon); being generous with alms and donations of food; much reading of the Quran; and seclusion<sup>493</sup> in the mosque, especially during the last ten days of Ramadan, in which is the Night of Power.<sup>494</sup> The Messenger (S) during these ten days put away his night garments and girded his loins for worship; he and his family did not rest from worshipping.

The Night of Power is either the twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty-fifth, twenty-seventh, or twenty-ninth night. (The case for) the twenty-seventh is stronger and more probable. Continual seclusion during these ten days is to be preferred. If one has vowed to seclude oneself for a continuous period, it is important that one not leave, except for calls of nature, and not spend a long time in the place to perform lesser ablutions. If one leaves to attend a funeral, to visit a sick person, to give witness, or to renew the purification,<sup>495</sup> the seclusion is broken off. There is nothing to fear concerning washing the hands, eating, or sleeping in the mosque. Whenever one returns from a call of nature, one has to renew the Intention (to remain in seclusion).

### THE INNER SECRET AND TRUE NATURE OF FASTING

Know that for fasting there are three degrees: the fasting of the common folk, the fasting of the select, and the fasting of the elite.

As for the fasting of the common folk, it is that which has been described and its limit is the restraint of the belly and the genitals. This is the lowest of the degrees.

As for the fasting of the elite, it is the loftiest of the degrees. It is to restrain the soul from thought of all things save God Most High. One must give oneself entirely to God and fast from everything—outwardly and inwardly—which is not He. Whatever one thinks about other than the discussion of God Most High and that which is related to Him breaks

<sup>493</sup> "seclusion" (*i'tikāf*): Secluding oneself in or retiring to a place of worship for a period of time for devotional purposes.

<sup>494</sup> See Note 429.

<sup>495</sup> This means the greater ablution (*ghusl*).

this fast. If one thinks about some worldly matter, even though it be lawful, this fast is nullified, unless if be about something worldly which aids him in the way of religion—in reality, that is not worldly—to the point that they would say: "If one thinks about the arrangements for the food for breaking the fast, the fast is broken and a lapse is recorded for him; for this is proof that he is not certain of the sustenance which God Most High has promised him." This is the degree of the prophets and the truly righteous; not everyone can attain it.

As for the fasting of the select, it is to restrain all of one's bodily limbs from impropriety, but is not limited to the stomach and the genitals. The perfection of this fasting lies in six things:

*FIRST:* To restrain the eye from looking at all things that distract one from God Most High, especially from that thing which arouses one's carnal appetite. The Messenger (S) says: "A glance is an arrow from among the arrows of Iblis, moistened with poison. Whoever avoids something out of fear of God Most High is given a robe of security, the sweetness of which remains in the soul, and he obtains its delight." Anas relates that the Messenger (S) said: "Five things break the fast: a lie, slander, talebearing, a false oath, and a lustful glance."

*SECOND:* To restrain the tongue from foolish talk and everything that is superfluous. One should remain silent or engage in the recitation of the Quran. Argument and disputatiousness are among the harmful things. As for slander and talebearing, according to the school of some religious scholars, even the fast of the common people is broken by them.

In the Traditions, it is related: "Two women were fasting, so much that they were in danger of dying from hunger. They asked the Messenger (S) for a ruling so that they might break their fasts. He sent them a bowl for them throw up in. From the throat of each of them, some congealed blood was brought up and the people were astonished by this. The Messenger (S) said: 'These two women have fasted from what God Most High has made lawful and they have broken it with what He has forbidden. They busied themselves with slander and what they brought up from their throats was the flesh of the people they have devoured.'"

*THIRD:* To restrain the ear from listening to that which is not proper to hear. The listener becomes the partner of the speaker in the sin of lying, slandering, etc.

*FOURTH:* To restrain the hands, feet, and all the bodily parts from the indecent. Whoever fasts and does such things is like the sick man who abstains from fruit but eats poison. For sin is poison and food is nourishment, harmful when too much is consumed, but in essence it is

not harmful. Concerning this, the Messenger (S) said: "They may fast much, but their portion from the fasting is nothing other than hunger and thirst."

**FIFTH:** Not to eat anything at the breaking of the fast which is forbidden or doubtful. One should not eat excessively of that which is purely lawful, for whenever one makes up at night for what one has missed during the day, what is achieved? The purpose of fasting is the weakening of carnal appetites. Eating twice as much increases them, especially of diverse foods brought together. Until the stomach is empty, the soul does not become pure. On the contrary, it is the practice of the Prophet that one should not sleep much during the day so that one perceives the effects of weakness and hunger in oneself. If one eats too much at night, one will become sleepy early and omit the night prayer. Because of this the Messenger (S) said: "No filled vessel is more inimical to God Most High than the stomach."

**SIXTH:** To be apprehensive<sup>496</sup> after breaking the fast as to whether one's fasting has been accepted or rejected. Hasan Basri passed by some people on the day of the 'Id Festival who were laughing and amusing themselves. He said: "God Most High has created the month of Ramadan (like an athletic) field for His servants to compete with each other in worshipping Him. One team is ahead and another behind. It is amazing that people laugh and have not learned the truth of their own state! By God, if the veil is lifted from affairs, the accepted ones would be engaged in their own happiness and the rejected would mourn in their anxiety. No one would be playing and laughing."

So, from this you learn that the fast of whoever limits his fasting to not eating and not drinking, is a soulless form, for the spirit (*rūh*) and true nature of fasting is that one make oneself like the angels, for whom there is absolutely no carnal appetite. The beasts are dominated by their appetite and for this reason they are far from (the angels). Any person dominated by appetite is also at the level of the beasts. When his appetite is decreased, he has begun to take on a resemblance to the angels. For this reason he approaches them—an approach in attributes, not in station—and the angels are near God Most High. Consequently, he also is near (God). When he makes arrangements to attend to supper and gives full aid to what the appetite desires, the appetite grows stronger, not weaker, and the spirit of the fasting is not obtained.

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<sup>496</sup> "apprehensive": literally, "for the soul to be suspended between fear and hope."

### THE REQUISITES OF THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

Know that discharge of religious obligations, atonement, expiation, and the observation of the moment the daily fast begins<sup>497</sup> are obligatory for the breaking of the fast<sup>498</sup> during Ramadan, but each one in its own place.

As for the discharge of incurred religious obligations, this is obligatory for every responsible Muslim who has to break his fast, with or without an excuse. It is obligatory upon the menstruating woman, the traveler, the sick person, and the pregnant. It is the same for an apostate, too. However, it is not necessary for the insane or children.

As for the atonement, this is not obligatory, except in case of sexual contact or the deliberate ejaculation of semen. The atonement for these things is the freeing of a slave. If one does not have (a slave), then one must fast two consecutive months. If one cannot, for reason of illness or weakness, one must give sixty *mudds*<sup>499</sup> of food to the poor, each poor person one *mudd*. A *mudd* is a *mann* less one third.

As for the start of the fast, it is obligatory for a person who, without excuse, breaks his fast during the rest of the day (to restart it). However, it is not required for a fasting and menstruating women, if, during the day, she becomes clean, nor is it obligatory for the traveler, even if he becomes a resident, or the sick person, even if he becomes well.

On the Day of Doubt,<sup>500</sup> if one person testifies that he has seen the moon, whoever has (already) eaten must leave off eating and fast for the rest of the day. Whoever commences a journey at midday should not break his fast; if he arrives at a city at midday, it is not proper to break the fast. Fasting is to be preferred for travelers over breaking the fast, unless they do not have the strength (to fast).

As for the expiation,<sup>501</sup> it is a *mudd* of food given to a needy person. Pregnant and nursing (women) must make up the fast and pay the expiation, as when a fast is broken for fear of (harming the welfare of) the child, or as sick person does out of fear for his own (welfare). An old person who cannot fast because of weakness must also pay this expiation in place of making it up. Whoever delays making up the fast of the

<sup>497</sup> "the moment the daily fast begins" (*imsāk*): literally, "keeping back, holding, detaining." It is the same time as that of the obligatory pre-dawn prayer (*fajr*).

<sup>498</sup> "breaking of the fast": *iftār*.

<sup>499</sup> *mudd*: a dry measure equal to either two or one and one-third *rātl*s; or about as much as the spread-out hands of a fully-grown man can hold. (Steingass)

<sup>500</sup> The Day of Doubt: the reference is to the day following the Night of Doubt earlier. Remember that the day commences at sunset. See Note 488.

<sup>501</sup> "expiation" (*fidyah*): *fidyah* also means "ransom."

month of Ramadan until the next Ramadan comes must (give) a *mudd* of food for every day to be made up.

#### EXCURSUS: [FASTING ON THE NOBLE AND MERITORIOUS DAYS]<sup>502</sup>

Fasting on the Noble and Meritorious Days is a Practice of the Prophet. Those which occur during the year are: the Day of 'Arafah,<sup>503</sup> the Tenth of Muharram,<sup>504</sup> the first nine days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah,<sup>505</sup> and the first ten days of the months of Muharram, Rajab, and Sha'ban.<sup>506</sup>

It is related in the Traditions that the most meritorious fasting after that of the month of Ramadan is fasting in the month of Muharram. It is a Practice of the Prophet to fast the entire month of Muharram, but (the report of the practice of fasting) the first ten days is more definite. And it is related in the Traditions: "Whoever fasts on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in the sacred months, the worship of seven hundred years is credited to him." The sacred months are four: Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab. The most meritorious of them is the month of Dhul-Hijjah, which is the time of the Pilgrimage. And in the Traditions: "Worship is at no time more meritorious and more beloved by God Most High than in the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. The fasting of one of these days is like the fasting of a year. The standing<sup>507</sup> of one of its nights is like the standing on the Night of Power." They asked: "O Messenger of God! Not the earnest striving (in defence of Islam), too?" He said: "Not the earnest striving too, except for a person whose horse is killed and his blood is shed during the striving."

Some of the Companions did not like to fast the entire month of Rajab lest it become the equal of Ramadan. For this reason they broke the fast for one day, or more. In the Traditions it is related: "From the middle of Sha'ban, there is no fasting until the month of Ramadan." In all, not fasting at the end of Sha'ban is good so that Ramadan may be separated from it. However, it is disliked to fast at the end of Sha'ban by

<sup>502</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>503</sup> The Day of 'Arafah: The climax of the Greater Pilgrimage where all the pilgrims assemble and stand ready in obedience to the command of God. It takes place on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah.

<sup>504</sup> The Tenth of Muharram ('Āshūrā'): This day commemorates the tragedy of Karbala, when in AH61/680CE the grandson of the Prophet, Husayn, was brutally slain. He had been challenging the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliphate.

<sup>505</sup> This is in association with the Greater Pilgrimage.

<sup>506</sup> See the list of Islamic months in the Translator's Preface in the introductory material at the beginning of this volume for their sequence and relation to one another.

<sup>507</sup> "standing" (*qiyām*): staying awake throughout the night engaged in religious activities such as formal prayer, remembrance of God, meditation, etc.

way of welcoming the advent of Ramadan, unless there is some other reason other than the welcoming.

*AS FOR THE NOBLE DAYS OF THE MONTH*, they are the “bright” days: the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth.<sup>508</sup> In the week, they are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. However, continuous fasting throughout the year would include all of these, but there are five days on which one must not fast: the two Festival days and the three days following the Festival of the Sacrifice. One must not refuse to break the fast, for that is disliked. Whoever cannot fast throughout the year may fast on alternate days; this was the fasting of David (A) and its merit is great.

In the Traditions, it is related that ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr al-‘As<sup>509</sup> (R) asked the Messenger (S) about the most meritorious days and the manner of fasting. He described (the fast of David (A)) to him. (‘Abdullah) said: “I want something more meritorious.” (The Messenger) replied: “There is nothing more meritorious than this.” At a lower level than this is fasting on Thursdays and Mondays which, with the month of Ramadan, would equal a third of the year.

When a person understands the true nature of fasting—that its purpose is the decrease of carnal appetite and the purification of the soul—he must always be watchful of his soul. If this is done, some times breaking a fast will be more meritorious; other times, keeping the fast. It was for this reason that the Messenger (S) some times fasted to such an extent that they said: “Will he never break his fast?” At other times he would not fast and they would say: “Will he never fast?” The pattern of his fasting was not discernible.

The religious scholars disliked not fasting more than four days in a row. They counted the Festival of the Sacrifice together with the following three days as four days for the reason that they feared continual non-fasting would blacken the soul, indifference would triumph, and the awareness and wakefulness of the soul grow weak.

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<sup>508</sup> The “bright” days (*ayyām-i bayḍ*): the “brightness” refers to the fullness of the moon on those days during the lunar month.

<sup>509</sup> ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr al-‘As: A Companion of the Prophet. He was with the Prophet at the battle of Hunayn in AH8/630CE after the conquest of Makkah. In *Al-Tabaqāt al-Kabir*, Ibn Sa‘d quotes a tradition that ‘Abdullah kept a notebook containing everything he heard from the Apostle of God.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCERNING THE GREATER PILGRIMAGE

Know that the Greater Pilgrimage is one of the Pillars of Islam and the worship of a lifetime. The Messenger (S) said: "Of anyone who dies without having made the Greater Pilgrimage, say: '(It is as if he had desired to) die either as a Jew or a Christian!'" And he said: "Whoever performs the Greater Pilgrimage without polluting his body with corruption and whose tongue does not engage in foolish and improper speech sheds all of his sins and is as though he had been born from his mother on that day." He also said: "There are many sins which cannot be atoned for except by standing at 'Arafat.'" And he said: "Satan is not seen more humbled, more wretched, and more bilious on any day other than on the Day of 'Arafah"<sup>510</sup> because of the mercy of God Most High which pours down upon the people so liberally and because of the great number of mortal sins which are forgiven."

And he said: "Whoever leaves his house intending to perform the Pilgrimage and dies along the way is credited with the performance of the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages every year until the Day of Resurrection. Whoever dies in Makkah or in Madinah has neither the presentation (of deeds) nor an accounting." And he said: "One Pilgrimage accepted (by God) is better than the world and all that it contains. The pilgrim is rewarded with nothing less than Paradise." And he said: "There is no greater sin than for someone to stand in 'Arafah and think that he is not forgiven."

'Ali bin Muwaffaq<sup>511</sup> was one of the great ones.<sup>512</sup> He said: "One year I performed the Pilgrimage. On the eve of 'Arafah, I saw in a dream two angels wearing green clothes who had descended from heaven. One said to the other: 'Dost thou know how many people have been at this year's Pilgrimage?' The other said: 'No.' He said: 'Six hundred thousand.' The other asked: 'Dost thou know how many had their Pilgrimage accepted?' He answered: 'No.' The first said: 'The Pilgrimage of six persons was accepted.' I woke up in terror and was very worried by these words. I said: 'In no way shall I be one of those six.' Thinking and worrying about this, I arrived at the station of Muzdalifah<sup>513</sup> and went to sleep. Once again, I saw those two angels who had been talking together. Then, one of them said to the other: 'Knowest

<sup>510</sup> See Note 503.

<sup>511</sup> Ali bin Muwaffaq: No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

<sup>512</sup> "the great ones" (*buzurgān*) or "saints."

<sup>513</sup> Muzdalifah (*mash'ar al-harām*): A camping place for the Pilgrims between Makkah and 'Arafat.

thou what God Most High has decreed this night amongst the people?" The other answered: "No." He said: "He has granted to each of those six persons one hundred thousand persons.<sup>514</sup> All for the deeds of those six!" Then, I woke up joyfully and thanked God!"

The Messenger (S) said: "God Most High has promised that every year six hundred thousand of His servants will make the Greater Pilgrimage to this House. If there are fewer than that number, a number of the angels are sent to complete this number. They throng around the Ka'bah as though it were a bride that will be presented (to her husband). Every one who has performed the Greater Pilgrimage goes around it and touches its curtains<sup>515</sup> so that when it is in heaven they will be with it in heaven."

### THE CONDITIONS FOR THE PILGRIMAGE

Know that every Muslim who performs the Pilgrimage during its proper time is correct. Its time is Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah, and the nine days of Dhul-Hijjah<sup>516</sup> until the dawning of the morning of the tenth day, the Day of the Festival. The Consecration<sup>517</sup> during this period, for the Greater Pilgrimage, is valid. If one adopts the Consecration before this, it is the Lesser Pilgrimage.<sup>518</sup> The Pilgrimage of a rational child is valid, and that of the nursing child, if his guardian makes the Consecration for the child and carries him to 'Arafat. If he carries the child during the Running and the Circumambulation, it is valid. Thus, the prerequisites for the validity of the Pilgrimage are nothing more than being a Muslim and performing it at the proper time.

However, the conditions for it to be considered the Greater Pilgrimage of Islam and the fulfillment of the religious obligation are five: being a Muslim, free, of age,<sup>519</sup> rational, and then consecrated at the proper time. If it is a child who is consecrated and he reaches puberty before the Standing at 'Arafah, or a slave who becomes a freeman before

<sup>514</sup> That is, the six whose Pilgrimage had been accepted would cause the acceptance of the Pilgrimages of 100,000 Pilgrims each. In other words, because of the virtues of the six, all of the Pilgrimages would be accepted by God Most High.

<sup>515</sup> "curtains" (*pardah-hā*): a reference to the brocade "robe" (Ar. *kiswah*) which is hung about the Ka'bah and renewed each year.

<sup>516</sup> See calendar in the Translator's Preface.

<sup>517</sup> "the Consecration": *ihrām*.

<sup>518</sup> The Lesser Pilgrimage ("Umrah) is less meritorious than the Greater Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) which is performed only during the appointed days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah. The Lesser Pilgrimage can be performed at any time during the year except the 8th, 9th, and 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, which are the days of the Greater Pilgrimage. The performance of both Pilgrimages together on a single visit to Makkah is called the Combined Pilgrimage (*Hajj-i Qirān*).

<sup>519</sup> "of age": having achieved puberty (*bāligh*).

that, he becomes eligible for the Greater Pilgrimage of Islam. These same conditions apply to the religious duty of the Lesser Pilgrimage, except with respect to time, for the entire year is the time of the Lesser Pilgrimage.

As for the condition for the person performing the Greater Pilgrimage on behalf of someone else, it is that he must have previously performed a Greater Pilgrimage for himself. If he declares the Intention for the other person before (performing the Greater Pilgrimage) for himself, then it is credited to him, not to the other person. First is the Greater Pilgrimage of Islam, then the make-up (Pilgrimage), then (the Greater Pilgrimage performed for) a vow, then (the Greater Pilgrimage) on behalf of someone else, in that order, even if the declared Intention is different from this.

As for the prerequisites for the necessity of making the Greater Pilgrimage, they are: Islam, puberty, rationality, freedom, and ability. The ability is of two kinds:

THE FIRST is that one be able to perform the Greater Pilgrimage oneself. There are four requirements for this: (1) one must be healthy; (2) the road must be safe: there must be no dangerous sea or enemy of whom one would fear for property and life; (3) one must have sufficient funds for the expenses of the journey and the return home and for the expenses of the family (at home) until that return, and one must have paid all outstanding debts; and (4) one should have an animal so that it would not be necessary to walk.

AS FOR THE OTHER KIND, it is if one is not able to go oneself as when one is paralyzed or immobile and there is not hope for improvement, except rarely. His ability lies in that he has sufficient wealth to send a deputy to perform the Pilgrimage on his behalf and to compensate that person for it. If one's son undertakes to perform the Greater Pilgrimage on one's behalf without compensation, then it becomes incumbent upon (the father) to give him some perquisite, because service to one's father is an honor. If he says: "I shall give money so that thou may hire someone," it is not necessary (for the son) to accept (the money) as a favor.<sup>520</sup>

When the ability has been acquired, one should hasten. If one delays, it is lawful if one finds the grace to perform it the next year. If one delays and then dies before accomplishing the Greater Pilgrimage,

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<sup>520</sup> That is, serving one's father is a great honor and the son undertakes it freely. However, the father should press some money upon his son in lieu of payment, saying that it is for the hire of a servant. That way, the integrity of the honor being shown by the son is not impaired.

he is in rebellion (against God) and someone, using funds from the estate, should perform a Greater Pilgrimage on behalf of the dead person, even though he has not made a will to that effect, for this is a debt that (the deceased) has incurred.

'Umar (R) said: "I thought about writing (a decree) that the tax on non-Muslims<sup>521</sup> should be collected from anyone in the cities who has the ability to perform the Greater Pilgrimage and does not do so."

### THE ESSENTIALS, OBLIGATIONS, AND TYPES OF PILGRIMAGE AND ITS RESTRICTIONS

Know that these essentials, without which the Pilgrimage is not valid, are five: Consecration, Circumambulation, then, after that the Running, the Standing at 'Arafah, and the Shaving of the Head, according to one report.

The obligations which, if omitted, do not nullify the Pilgrimage—though sacrificing a sheep is necessary—are six: (1) consecrating oneself at the Stations<sup>522</sup>—if one progresses beyond them (towards Makkah), a sheep should be given, (2) the stoning, (3) waiting patiently at 'Arafat until the setting of the sun, (4) stopping at Muzdalifah during the night, and (5) the same at Mina, and (6) the Circumambulation of Farewell. About the last four there is something else to be said: if one omits them, it is not necessary to offer a sheep, but it is the practice of the Prophet to do so.

As for the types of Pilgrimage, there are three: separate,<sup>523</sup> combined,<sup>524</sup> and reaping advantage.<sup>525</sup>

*THE "SEPARATE"* is to be preferred, for the Greater Pilgrimage was first performed by itself. When this is completed, one leaves the state of consecration and assumes the consecration for the Lesser Pilgrimage. Then, one performs that. The consecration for the Lesser Pilgrimage is better at Ja'ranah, which is better than Tan'im, which is

<sup>521</sup> The tax on non-Muslims (*jizyah*): A poll tax collected from free non-Muslims in lieu of the military service to which Muslims were subject.

<sup>522</sup> "the Stations": *miqāt*.

<sup>523</sup> "separate" (*ifrād*): this is to perform the Greater Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) first and the Lesser Pilgrimage (*'Umrah*) afterwards.

<sup>524</sup> "combined" (*qirān*): this is to perform the Intention for both the Greater Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) and Lesser Pilgrimage (*'Umrah*) without an interval of the relinquishment of the state of Consecration (*ihrām*) between them.

<sup>525</sup> "reaping advantage" (*tamattu'*): this is to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage (*'Umrah*) first and the Greater Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) afterwards.

better than Hudaybiyah.<sup>526</sup> All of these places are in accordance with the practice of the Prophet.

AS FOR THE "COMBINED" GREATER PILGRIMAGE, it is that one declares: "*I obey Thee in the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages,*" so that one consecrates oneself for both at the same time and perform the rites of the Greater Pilgrimage only, the Lesser Pilgrimage being subsumed in it as the lesser ablution is subsumed in the greater ablution. Whoever does this must offer a sheep unless he is a resident of Makkah. In that case, it would not be necessary, for the station of Consecration would be Makkah itself. When performing the combined Greater Pilgrimage, if one performs the Circumambulation (of the Ka'bah) and the Running before the Standing at 'Arafah, the Running will be counted for both the Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages, but the Circumambulation must be repeated after the Standing at 'Arafah, for it is a condition of the obligatory circumambulation<sup>527</sup> that it be performed after the Standing.

AS FOR "REAPING ADVANTAGE," it is that when one reaches the station of Consecration, one consecrates oneself for the Lesser Pilgrimage and comes out of it in Makkah, so as not be under the restriction of the consecration. Then, at the time of the Greater Pilgrimage one goes to Makkah and consecrates oneself for the Greater Pilgrimage. One must offer a sheep, but if one cannot do so, one must fast three days before the Festival of the Sacrifice, either continuously or on separate days, and one must fast another seven days when one returns to one's homeland. In the combined Greater Pilgrimage, too, if one does not have a sheep, one must fast ten days in the same way.

THE BLOOD-SACRIFICE of the Greater Pilgrimage of reaping advantage becomes obligatory upon a person who has consecrated himself for the Lesser Pilgrimage in Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah, or the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah in order to lessen the hardship of the Pilgrimage. The consecration for the Greater Pilgrimage should be done at one of its own stations. Then, if one is an inhabitant of Makkah or a stranger and comes at the time of the Pilgrimage to a station of consecration and it is a mile away, one must offer a sheep.

AS FOR THE RESTRICTIONS of the Pilgrimage, they are six:

First: Clothing. It is not proper in a consecrated state to wear trousers, turban, and stockings. Rather, a loin wrap, cloak, and sandals are proper. If sandals are not available, shoes are lawful. If a loin wrap is not available, trousers are lawful. Covering the seven members of the

<sup>526</sup> Three places where pilgrims consecrate themselves by assuming the characteristic dress of the Pilgrimage.

<sup>527</sup> That is, the Farewell Circumambulation.

body<sup>528</sup> with the loin wrap is lawful, except for the head, which it is not proper to cover. For a woman, it is lawful to wear her usual clothing, but the face should not be covered. It is lawful for her to be either in a litter or under a parasol.

Second: One should not use perfume. If one does and wears (ordinary) clothing, a sheep must be offered.

Three: One should not shave or pare one's nails. If one does, a sheep must be offered. Going to the bath, bloodletting, cupping, and combing the hair, so long as it is not pulled out, are lawful.

Fourth: One should not engage in sexual intercourse. If one does, one must offer a camel, a cow, or seven sheep and the Pilgrimage becomes corrupted and must be made up. If it is after the first remittance,<sup>529</sup> then a camel must be offered, but the Pilgrimage is not ruined.

Fifth: Sexual foreplay such as caressing a woman or kissing is not proper, nor any kind of touching that voids purification. One must offer a sheep. The same is true for masturbation. A consecrated person should not undertake a marriage. If he does, it is not valid and nothing (of the contract) becomes binding.

Sixth: Hunting is not appropriate except (fishing) from water.<sup>530</sup> If one hunts and kills an animal, something similar to it must be offered (as sacrifice in atonement): a camel, a cow, or a sheep; whichever best resembles that animal.

### THE MANNER OF PERFORMING THE PILGRIMAGE

Know that as one must know the manner of the acts of the Pilgrimage, from the beginning to the end, and in their order—the obligations, the (recommended) Practices of the Prophet, and the rules of conduct mixed together—as is the Practice of the Prophet, because for whomever whose worship is by habit, the Practices of the Prophet, the etiquette, and the obligations are the same, for when one reaches the station of love, one reaches the voluntary and the recommended.<sup>531</sup> As the Messenger (S) said that God Most High says: "My servants do not

<sup>528</sup> The seven members of the body (*haft andām*): the head, breast, belly, hands, and feet; or, the head, hands, sides, and feet.

<sup>529</sup> "remittance" (*tahallul*): the release from the restrictions of the Pilgrimage. See below in *The Manner of the Rest of the Acts of the Pilgrimage*.

<sup>530</sup> Hunting (*sayd*) means both hunting in the usual English sense of hunting animals and also fishing. Hunting animals, while in a consecrated state is disapproved of; however, fishing is permissible.

<sup>531</sup> The rites and ceremonies of the Greater Pilgrimage are of a specific order, but they are of different categories: some are divinely imposed obligations, some are the Practice of the Prophet, and others are approved civilities. The person who devotes himself to God performs them all without distinction.

draw near to Me in a greater manner than by observing My divine commands. The person who is a servant never rests in drawing near by means of voluntary and recommended practices so that through them I become his hearing, sight, hand, and tongue. He sees Me; he hears Me, he grasps Me, and he speaks to Me."

Therefore, it is important that the rules of conduct and recommended practices of worship be performed and the rules be observed with respect to everything.

#### THE RULES OF CONDUCT AND PROVISIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

First, (a person) declares the Intention to perform the Greater Pilgrimage. He repents and returns all unlawfully obtained things. He discharges his debts. He gives (sufficient funds for) the expenses for his family, children, and all who are dependent upon him for sustenance (in his absence). He writes a will. He obtains the provisions for the journey by lawful means, taking care to avoid the doubtful; for if one performs the Pilgrimage with doubtful goods and funds, there is a fear that it will not be accepted. He should prepare sufficient provisions so that he may be able to aid the poor on the way.

Before setting out, he should distribute some alms for the safety of the road. He should hire sturdy mules and show all of whatever is being carried to the muleteer so that there be no unpleasantness on the journey.<sup>532</sup> He should find a good companion who is (also) traveling to be a helper in religion and the affairs of the trip. He should bid farewell to friends and settle any outstanding matters with them and ask for their supplications. He should say to each one of them: "*I remand thy religion, thy security, and the conclusion of thine affair to God.*" They say to him: "(Be) in the keeping of God and in His shelter; may God provision thee with piety; may He avert evil from thee; may He forgive thy sin and turn thee to goodness wheresoever thou turnest."

When about to come out of the house, he should perform a two-bow formal prayer. In the first bow, he should recite the Opening and the Disbelievers.<sup>533</sup> In the second bow, he should recite the Opening and the Unity.<sup>534</sup> After the formal prayer has been completed, he should say:

*"O God! Thou art the Master on the journey; Thou art (my) Deputy for my family, property, and children; preserve us and them from every kind of harm. O God! Truly we beseech Thee on this our way for reverence, piety, and acts which may please Thee."*

<sup>532</sup> That is, to avoid disputes about the weight and bulk of the loads the animals will carry.

<sup>533</sup> The Opening and the Disbelievers: The first and 109th chapters (*sūrah*) of the Quran respectively.

<sup>534</sup> The Opening and the Unity: The first and 112th chapters of the Quran respectively.

When he reaches the gate of the residence, he says: "*In the name of God. I trust in God; there is no power and no strength save in God; O God! I have come out with (Thine aid), I have trusted in Thee, I have taken refuge with Thee, and I have turned to Thee. O God! Provision me with piety and forgive me my sins and turn me to goodness wherever I turn.*"

When he has mounted his animal, he says: "*In the name of God and with God, and God is Greater. Praise be to Him Who has subordinated these to us and we were not capable of it. Verily, we are returning to our Lord.*" (Q. 43:13-14)

He should occupy himself during the entire journey with the remembrance of God and the recitation of the Quran. If some hardship confronts him, he should say: "*O God! Thou hast the pre-eminence over all eminences; Thine is the praise in every condition.*" If one be frightened on the journey, one should recite the *Verse of the Throne* (Q. 2:255-6), the *Verse of the Testimony* (Q. 3:17), the *Unity* (Q. 112), and the two *Seeking Refuges* (Q. 113,114).

#### THE MANNER OF CONSECRATION AND THE ENTRANCE INTO MAKKAH

Upon reaching a Station of Consecration, where the caravan assumes the state of Consecration, he first performs the greater ablution and trims the hair and nails as we have described for Friday (congregational prayer).<sup>535</sup> He takes off sewn clothing and puts on the white loin wrap and cloak. He may perfume himself before the consecration. After mounting (his animal) when preparing to leave, one should prod the camels and turn to the road and—with soul and tongue—declare the Intention to perform the Greater Pilgrimage, and (then) say: "*I am at Thy service, O God! I am at Thy service! Thou hast no partner; I am at Thy service. All praise, blessings, and sovereignty are Thine. Thou hast no partner.*" One repeats these words loudly (again and again), and at every rise and dip and wherever the caravan is buffeted and intermingled with crowds.<sup>536</sup>

During the Pilgrimage there are nine occasions when the greater ablution is the Practice of the Prophet: the Consecration, the entrance into Makkah, the Circumambulation of the Visit, the Standing at 'Arafat, the Station of Muzdalifah, the three greater ablutions for casting the

<sup>535</sup> See Chapter Four above.

<sup>536</sup> Most pilgrims travel in "caravans" (*qāfilah*, pl. *qawāfil*) that perform the rites and travels between various points together. Because of the huge numbers, the movements of large masses of people during the Greater Pilgrimage can lead to breaking up of the groups. Shouting to each is one way of maintaining cohesion. Caravan leaders today carry flags or staffs raised high in such situations so that the caravan may regroup.

stones at the three Jamarah, and the Farewell Circumambulation. However, there is no greater ablution for the (later) stoning of the Jamarat al-'Aqabah.

After performing the greater ablution, one enters Makkah and one's eyes fall on the House.<sup>537</sup> While one is in the middle of the city, one says: "There is no god but God; God is Greater (than all else). O God, Thou art Peace and peace is from Thee. Thy House is the House of Peace. Thou art to be praised, O Possessor of Majesty and Noble Generosity! O God, verily, this is Thy House which Thou hast exalted, honored, and ennobled, O God, so increase it in greatness, honor, and nobility. Increase it in awe. Increase the righteousness and high-mindedness of those who make the Greater Pilgrimage to it. O God, open to me the gates of Thy mercy and cause me to enter Thy paradise and protect me from the accursed Satan."

Then, one enters the mosque by the Gate of Bani Shaybah and directs one's steps to the Black Stone. One kisses it, but if one is not able to do so because of the crowd, one raises one's hand and says: "O God, I have performed my trust and I have fulfilled my covenant. Bear witness to my arrival."

Then, one performs the Circumambulation and the Running.

#### THE RULES OF PERFORMING THE CIRCUMAMBULATION

Know that the Circumambulation<sup>538</sup> is like obligatory prayer; in it are the (obligations of) purity of the body, clothing, and place, and the covering of the privates. However, speaking during it is permissible.

First, (a male) must perform the Practice of the Prophet of *idtibā'*. *Idtibā'* is to pass the cloak under the right arm so that both corners of the robe are over the left shoulder.<sup>539</sup> Then, one places the House to the left and performs the circumambulations, beginning with the Black Stone so that between one and the House there is not less than three steps distance lest the foot step on the foundation<sup>540</sup> which is the boundary of the House. When commencing the circumambulation, one says: "O God, (I do this) with belief in Thee and in affirmation of Thy Book, in faithfulness to Thy covenant, and in obedience to the practice of Thy Prophet Muhammad on whom be the blessings and peace of God."

<sup>537</sup> "the House" (*khānah*): that is, the Ka'bah (*Ka'bāh*), the House of God (*bayt Allāh*). In Persian, it is customarily referred to as *khānah-yi khudā*.

<sup>538</sup> "the Circumambulation": *tawāf*.

<sup>539</sup> This is to leave the pilgrim's right arm bare and free for pointing, etc., much in the manner of the ancient Roman toga. This practice applies only to males.

<sup>540</sup> "foundation" (*shādarwān*): The Ka'bah is built upon a foundation which is thicker than the walls of the Ka'bah itself. It projects out about a foot beyond the outer edge of the wall and is about 10 inches high.

Upon reaching the Door of the House,<sup>541</sup> one says: "O God, this house is Thy sacred House, and this sacred precinct is Thy sacred precinct; this security is Thy security and this is the station of one who seeks refuge with Thee from the Fire."

Upon reaching the Iraqi Corner,<sup>542</sup> one says: "O God, I see refuge with Thee from ascribing partnership, doubt, infidelity, hypocrisy, dissension, bad traits of character, and bad appearance in my family, property, and children."

When opposite the Rainspout,<sup>543</sup> one says: "O God, give me shelter under Thy Throne on the day there will be no shade except the shade of Thy Throne. O God, give me to drink from the cup of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, the drink, after the drinking of which, one will never be thirsty."

Upon reaching the Syrian Corner,<sup>544</sup> one says: "O God, make this an accepted Pilgrimage and a praiseworthy Running. (Make my) sins forgiven, and (my) trade not unprofitable, O Mighty One! O Forgiver! My Lord, forgive me and have mercy, and pass over what Thou knowest (of my mistakes), for Thou art Almighty and Most Generous."

Upon reaching the Yemenite Corner,<sup>545</sup> one says: "O God, I seek refuge with Thee from unbelief, poverty, the torment of the grave, and the turmoil of life and death. And I seek refuge with Thee from disgrace in this world and the next."

Between this corner and the Black Stone,<sup>546</sup> one says: "O God, our Lord, bestow upon us goodness in this world and in the next and preserve us with Thy mercy from the torment of the Fire and the torment of the grave."

One performs this seven times, and each time one utters these supplications. Each circumambulation is called a "lap."<sup>547</sup> For three laps, one must hurry quickly and energetically. If it is crowded near the House, then it should be done at a distance so that one may proceed rapidly. In the last four laps, one walks slowly. One kisses the Black Stone each time and gestures to the Yemenite Corner. If one is not able to do this because of the crowd, then one gestures. When the seven laps have been completed, one stands between the door of the House and the Stone and places the abdomen, chest, and the right side of the face on the wall of the House with both hands below one's head placed on the wall

<sup>541</sup> The Door is in the eastern wall, about 7 feet above the ground.

<sup>542</sup> The Iraqi corner is the northern corner.

<sup>543</sup> The rainspout (*nāwdān*) which carries rain water off the roof. It is near the top of the northwestern wall.

<sup>544</sup> The Syrian Corner is the western corner.

<sup>545</sup> The Yemenite Corner is the southern corner.

<sup>546</sup> The Black Stone is set in the eastern corner.

<sup>547</sup> "lap": Ar. *shawt*.

or strike the curtains of the Ka'bah. This place is called the *Multazim*.<sup>548</sup> Supplications made here are answered. One says: "O God, O Lord of the Ancient House! Emancipate my neck from the fire and protect me from all evil! Make me content with what Thou givest me as sustenance and bless me in what Thou givest me."

Then, one utters blessings (upon the Prophet) and the "Seeking Forgiveness," and pours out whatever is in one's heart.

Then, one stands back and performs two bows of formal prayer; they are called "the Two Bows of the Circumambulation." In the first bow, one should recite the Praise and the Disbelievers<sup>549</sup> and in the second, the Praise and the Unity.<sup>550</sup> One should supplicate God after the formal prayer. Until one has completed the seven laps, (the rite of) one circumambulation is not completed. One performs a two-bow prayer after every seven laps. Then, one moves close to the Black Stone and kisses it and finishes (the circumambulation). Then, one turns to perform the Running.

### THE MANNER OF PERFORMING THE RUNNING

One must exit (the Grand Mosque) by the Safa Gate.<sup>551</sup> One mounts the few steps to the top of Safa (Hill) so that one sees the Ka'bah. Facing the Ka'bah, one says: "There is no god but God; He is One and has no partners. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise. He gives life and causes death. He is Ever-living and does not die. In His Hand is all goodness and He is All-Powerful over everything. There is no god but God; He is One. He has kept His promise and helped His servant. He fortified His army and vanquished the Confederates alone. There is no god but God! (We are) faithful to Him in our religion, even if the unbelievers loathe (us)."

One supplicates God and makes whatever request one wishes. Then, one descends and begins the Running<sup>552</sup> to (the hill of) Marwah. At the beginning, one proceeds slowly, saying: "My Lord, forgive me and have mercy and pass over what Thou knowest (of my mistakes), for Thou art Almighty and Most Generous. O God! Our Lord, give us goodness in this world and the next and protect us from the torment of the fire."

<sup>548</sup> *Multazim*: engaged, committed, under obligation, etc. (Wehr); taking as a duty upon one's self, convinced, etc. (Steingass).

<sup>549</sup> Quran, chapters 1 and 109.

<sup>550</sup> Quran, chapters 1 and 112.

<sup>551</sup> The expansions of the precincts of the Great Mosque of Makkah in the 20th CE century have altered the geography considerably. The hillocks of Safa and Marwah are now covered and incorporated into the Grand Mosque itself. The Safa Gate was originally in the southeastern wall of the precinct and one went outside of the mosque in the open air.

<sup>552</sup> "Running, the" Ar. *sa'y*.

Thus, one goes slowly (at a normal walking pace) until one reaches the green column that is in the corner of the mosque. Before (reaching) it, at a distance of six yards, one starts to run until one reaches the other two green columns. Then one goes on slowly until reaching Marwah. When one returns to Safa, this constitutes two laps. One does this seven times, each one in this manner.

When one has finished this, the Circumambulation of Entry and the Running have been performed. This is a Practice of the Prophet in the Pilgrimage. However, the circumambulation that is obligatory is performed after the Standing.

It is the Practice of the Prophet to be in a state of purity during the Running, and it is obligatory in the Circumambulation. This is enough for the Running. It is not a necessary condition after the Standing, but (a running) must follow a circumambulation, even if that circumambulation is a Practice of the Prophet (rather than an obligatory one).

#### THE MANNER OF THE STANDING AT 'ARAFAH

Know that if the caravan arrives at 'Arafat on the Day of 'Arafah they must perform the Circumambulation of Entry. If they arrive before (the Day of) 'Arafah, they (first) perform the Circumambulation of Entry and leave Makkah on the Day of Preparation.<sup>553</sup> That night, they remain at Mina and the next day go to 'Arafah. The time of the Standing begins on the afternoon on the Day of 'Arafah until the dawn of the Day of the Festival appears. If they arrived after dawn, the Pilgrimage is nullified. On the Day of 'Arafah, they perform the greater ablution and perform the noon and afternoon obligatory formal prayers<sup>554</sup> together so that they may occupy (themselves) in making supplications.

They do not fast on this day so that they may gain strength to extend their supplications, for the inner mystery of the Greater Pilgrimage is the congregating of dear souls and the aspirations at this noble moment. The most meritorious remembrance at this time is the phrase *There is no god but God*. In short, one must be occupied from noon to dusk with supplication, weeping, seeking forgiveness, making sincere repentance, and begging pardon for the past.

There are many supplications for this time, the citing of which would be lengthy. We have cited them in *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*. One may learn them from there, or one may recite any supplication one knows at this time, for all supplications are effective during this auspicious time. If one cannot recite them from memory, one

<sup>553</sup> The Day of Preparation (*tarwiyah*): the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah.

<sup>554</sup> That is, they are performed at the same time, one immediately after the other.

should read them, or say "Amin" continuously while one has someone else recite them.

One must leave the boundaries of 'Arafat before the sun sets.

#### THE MANNER OF THE REST OF THE ACTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Then, one leaves 'Arafat and goes to Muzdalifah and performs the greater ablution, for Muzdalifah has a sacred precinct.<sup>555</sup> The evening prayer is delayed and performed (in conjunction) with the night prayer with one Call to Prayer and two Calls to Assemble.<sup>556</sup> If one can, one should remain awake all of this night at Muzdalifah, for it is a noble and valuable night. Standing at night there is one of the acts of worship. Whoever does not establish himself there must sacrifice a sheep.

From this place, one picks up seventy stones to throw in Mina, for many such stones may be found here. During the second half of the night, one sets out from Mina and performs the early dawn obligatory prayer. When one reaches the end of Muzdalifah, the place called the Sacred Monument,<sup>557</sup> one sits and supplicates until the breaking of the dawn. After this one reaches a place called the valley of Muḥassir. One should drive one's animals faster here. If one is on foot, one should increase one's pace until one has crossed its breadth, as this was the Practice of the Prophet.

Then, on the morning of the Festival, one should utter the Magnification and the Compliance<sup>558</sup> from time to time, until one reaches the height where are what are called the *Jamarāt*.<sup>559</sup> Passing this place, one reaches an elevation to the right of the road which, when one faces the direction of prayer—it is called the *Jamarat-al 'Aqabah*—until the sun is a spear's length high. Then, one throws seven stones at this *Jamarah*. It is preferred to be facing the direction of prayer (when throwing them). Here, the (slogan) is changed from the Compliance to the Magnification.

<sup>555</sup> The sacred precinct at Muzdalifah is the Hill of Quzah.

<sup>556</sup> That is, one call to assemble for each obligatory prayer, but the evening prayer is performed immediately after the sunset prayer.

<sup>557</sup> "the Sacred Monument" (*Mash'ar al-Harām*): This place is mentioned in the Quran (Q. 2:198) in a passage about the Pilgrimage. As the Ghazzali's text indicates, it is located in Muzdalifah.

<sup>558</sup> "the Compliance" (*talbiyah*): That is the uttering of: "*I am at Thy service, O God!, I am at Thy service! Thou hast no partner, I am at Thy service. All praise, blessings, and sovereignty are Thine. Thou hast no partner.*"

<sup>559</sup> "the *Jamarāt*" (sing. *Jamarah*): the three pillars of stone at Mina commemorating, according to tradition, the three places Satan manifested himself in the shape of a venerable old man to Adam, Abraham, and Ishmael. The pillars are called "the high" (*al-'ulā*), "the middle" (*al-wustā*) and "the last" (*al-'aqabah*). The stones collected at Muzdalifah are cast at these pillars as a symbolic repudiation of Satan.

With every stone one throws, one says: "*O God, in affirmation of Thy Book and in obedience to the practice of Thy Prophet Muhammad.*" After finishing this, one refrains from crying the Compliance or the Magnification—except after performing the necessary acts of obligatory formal prayer in which the Magnification is pronounced—until morning of the last of the days of *tashriq* dawns,<sup>560</sup> which is the fourth day of the Festival of the Sacrifice. Then, one returns to one's camp and makes supplications. Then, one offers the sacrifice, if one wishes to do so, observing the rules of the sacrifice, and shaves one's hair. After one has cast the stones and shaved this day, one achieves a remittance<sup>561</sup> and all of the restrictions of the Consecration are lifted save those of sexual intercourse and hunting.

Then, one goes to Makkah and performs the Circumambulation of the Corner. When half of the night of the Festival has passed, the time for this circumambulation begins. However, it is preferred that it be done on the day of the Festival. The end of the time (for this circumambulation) is not fixed; on the contrary, if one delays, it is not invalid, but the other remittances are not obtained and sexual intercourse remains unlawful.

After one performs this circumambulation—in the form we have described with respect the Circumambulation of Entrance—the Greater Pilgrimage is complete. Sexual intercourse and hunting become lawful.<sup>562</sup> If one has not done so, one performs the Running of the Corner after this circumambulation. After the casting stones, cutting the hair, and the Circumambulation have been performed, the Greater Pilgrimage is complete and one leaves the state of Consecration.

As for the casting of stones during the days of *tashriq* and the stopping at Mina, they occur after leaving the consecrated state. When one has finished the Circumambulation and the Running, one comes to Mina on the day of the Festival and spends the night there, for this station is obligatory. The next day, one performs the greater ablution, after the noon hour, for the casting of the stones. One throws seven stones at the first Jamarah<sup>563</sup> which is nearest 'Arafat. Then one stands facing the direction of prayer and supplicates (God), in the amount of the Chapter of the Cow,<sup>564</sup> and then, one throws seven stones at the middle Jamarah and supplicates God. Then one throws seven stones at the last

<sup>560</sup> "*tashriq*": literally, "drying flesh in the sun." A name given to the three days after the sacrifice at Makkah during the Greater Pilgrimage, either because the flesh of the sacrificial victim is then dried, or because the animals are not sacrificed until sunrise.

<sup>561</sup> See Note 529. The shaving of the hair applies, of course, to males only.

<sup>562</sup> This is the second remittance referred to in the previous paragraph.

<sup>563</sup> "the first *jamarah*": that is, the "high *jamarah*" referred to in Note 559.

<sup>564</sup> The Chapter of the Cow (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*): the second and longest chapter of the Quran. One offers supplications for a period as long as it would take to recite this chapter.

Jamarah and stays the night at Mina. On the third day of the Festival, one casts twenty-one stones in the same manner at the Jamarāt. If one wishes to content oneself with this, one proceeds to Makkah. If one stays until the sun sets, staying the night also becomes necessary. On the next day one must also throw twenty-one stones.

### THE MANNER OF THE LESSER PILGRIMAGE

If one wishes to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage, one performs the greater ablution and puts on the garb of Consecration, as in the Greater Pilgrimage, and leaves Makkah for one of the rendezvous points for pilgrims.<sup>565</sup> They are Ja'ranah, Tan'im, and Hudaybiyah. One declares the intention to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage and says: "*I am at Thy service for the Lesser Pilgrimage.*" One goes to the Mosque of 'Ayishah (R) and performs two bows of formal prayer, then one returns to Makkah, repeating the Compliance while on the way. Upon entering the (Sacred) Mosque, one stops uttering the Compliance and performs the Circumambulation and the Running, as we have described for the Greater Pilgrimage. Then one cuts one's hair in the Lesser Pilgrimage and with this, it is completed.

One can do this during the entire year. Anyone who is there should perform the Lesser Pilgrimage (frequently). If he is not able to do that, he should perform the Circumambulation (frequently). If he is not able to do that, he must contemplate the House (frequently). Upon entering the House,<sup>566</sup> he should perform a prayer between its two pillars. He should enter barefoot, respectfully and with veneration. One should drink as much of the water of Zamzam<sup>567</sup> as possible, so that the stomach is full: it is the cure for whatever thou intendest. One says: "*O God, make it a remedy for all sickness; bestow upon us sincerity, certainty, and dispensation in this world and the next with Thy mercy, O Most Merciful and Most Compassionate!*"

### THE FAREWELL CIRCUMAMBULATION

When one intends to leave, first one packs up one's things and the last thing of all that one does is to bid farewell. This is done in the form of a circumambulation. In this circumambulation, there is not the throwing the robe over the left shoulder or any hurrying. One performs a

<sup>565</sup> "rendezvous points for pilgrims" or "Stations": *miqāt*.

<sup>566</sup> That is, upon going inside the Ka'bah itself.

<sup>567</sup> Zamzam: the name of the well close by the Ka'bah. In Islamic tradition, it is the spring from which Hagar and Ishmael drank when thirsting after their expulsion from the household of Abraham.

two-bow prayer and goes to the *Multazim*.<sup>568</sup> There one offers supplications and departs, in such a manner<sup>569</sup> so that one his continually looking at the House, moving away until one passes out of the (Sacred) Mosque.

### THE VISIT TO MADINAH

Then, one leaves for the visit of Madinah, about which the Messenger (S) said; "For whoever visits me after my death it is the same as though I were alive." And he said: "Whoever goes to Madinah without any motive other than a visit, a right is confirmed (for him) with God Most High to make me his intercessor."

After entering the Madinah road, one should utter many blessings for the Prophet. When one sees the walls of Madinah, one should say: "*O God, this is the Sacred Precinct of Thy Prophet, upon whom be the blessings and peace of God. Make him for me a protection from the fire and a security from the torment and a bad accounting.*"

One should perform the greater ablution first, and then enter Madinah. One should use a good scent and wear clean, white clothing. After entering, one should be humble and reverent, saying: "*My Lord, cause me to enter the entrance of truth and cause me to come out the exit of truth and from near Thyself make for me a defending power.*"

Then, one enters the Mosque (of the Prophet) and performs a two-bow prayer before the pulpit, so that the column of the pulpit is in line with the right shoulder, for this was the place of the Messenger (S). Then, one begins the visit and turns to the wall of the shrine with the back towards the direction of prayer. Placing one's hands on the wall and kissing it are not Practices of the Prophet: rather, standing respectfully at a distance is closer (to that practice). Then, one says: "*Peace be upon thee, O Messenger of God; peace be upon thee, O Prophet of God; peace be upon thee, O Beloved of God; peace be upon thee, O Choicest of God; peace be upon thee, O Most Noble of the sons of Adam; peace be upon thee, O Master of the Sent Ones; peace be upon thee, O Seal of the prophets and Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds. Peace be upon thee and upon thy pure companions and thy pure wives, the mothers of the believers. May God reward thee from us the best of what He rewards a prophet from among His people. May God bless thee whenever the rememberers remember thee and the neglecters neglect thee.*"

If someone has charged the visitor to greet (the Prophet), one says: "*Peace be upon thee from so-and-so, peace be upon thee from so-and so.*" Then, one moves two yards down and greets Abu Bakr and

<sup>568</sup> See Note 548 above.

<sup>569</sup> That is, by backing out.

'Umar (R) saying: "*Peace be upon both of you, O ministers of the Messenger of God and his helpers in the establishment of the religion while he was alive and his representatives after him in religious affairs, the followers in his footsteps, and the practitioners of his practice. May (God) reward you both with that which is better than He rewarded the ministers of the prophets of His religion.*"

Then, one stands there and supplicates God as much as one can. Then, one goes out (of the Mosque) and goes to the graveyard and visits the graves of the Companions and the great. When one is about to leave, one visits (the tomb of) the Prophet again and says farewell.

#### THE INNER SECRETS AND FINER POINTS OF THE GREATER PILGRIMAGE

Know that that which we have described is the form of the actions. In each one of these actions, there is an inner secret, the purpose of which is a lesson and a reminder by teaching one of the affairs of the Hereafter.

Its real true nature is that man has been created so that he may not achieve the perfection of (spiritual) happiness so long as he does not abandon his personal free will, as we have discussed in the Prolegomena. Pursuing one's caprices is the cause of destruction. So long as he is subservient to his free will and that which it does is not in accordance to the rule of the Religious Law, he is following his lusts. His behavior is not that of a servant of God. His (spiritual) happiness lies in his servitude.

It was for this reason that monasticism and travel for peoples were commanded in other religions, so that their worshippers would go from amongst the people or to the top of a mountain and spend their entire lives in asceticism and religious striving. So the Messenger (S) was asked: "Is there no traveling about and monasticism in this religion?" He answered: "For me earnest striving and the Greater Pilgrimage are in their stead."

So God, may He be honored and glorified, has commanded the Greater Pilgrimage for our people in place of monasticism, for in it not only the purpose of striving is found but also other lessons are made manifest. God Most High has sanctified the Ka'bah and related it to Himself. He has made it like the presence of kings and has made its environs His Sacred Precinct. He has forbidden hunting (in it) and made its trees inviolable, out of veneration and respect for Him. 'Arafat is like the courtyard in the courts of kings, placed in front of the Sacred Precinct so that (people) will head for the House from all directions of the world, although they know He is above alighting in a house or in a place. However, since the yearning (of the Pilgrims) is great, whatever is related to the Friend is beloved and desirable.

Therefore, the people of Islam put aside family, property, and offspring and endured the dangers of the desert in this yearning. Like servants, they made for the Presence. In these acts of worship, there are for them things that no one could imagine, such as the casting of stones and the Running between Marwah and Safa. Since everything that is imaginable for one also becomes familiar because one knows what one is doing and why one is doing it; as one knows that in the poor rate, there is kindness for the poor, and in formal prayer the humbling of one self before the God of the universe, and in fasting, there is abasement and the defeat of the armies of Satan, it may be that one's nature will be moved in agreement. The perfection of service (to God) is that one obeys an order immediately, so that no internal importuning may appear. The Casting of Stones and the Running are among those things which cannot be done except in absolute obedience. It was for this that the Messenger (S) said: "In the Pilgrimage, alone, (one says) "*I am at Thy service in my Pilgrimage, my worship and my servitude.*" He called this worship and servitude.

That there are some who are perplexed about the point and object of these acts is from their neglect of their true nature. Their point is their the lack of a point; their purpose is their lack of purpose, so that utter obedience be made manifest and one's view be upon nothing other than command itself. There is no room for any other benefit for the intellect and the temperament until one abandons that which belongs to the self and throws it away; for one's happiness is in its non-existence, so that nothing remains of one except God and His commands.

AS FOR THE LESSONS OF THE PILGRIMAGE, they are that this journey has been made like a model for the journey of the Hereafter. In *this* journey, the destination is the House, while in *that* journey the destination is the Lord of the House. Consequently, one must learn from the preliminaries and conditions of this journey the conditions of that journey. When bidding farewell to family and friends, one should understand that this resembles what that farewell will be during the agonies of death. One must be thus: first, one empties the soul of all ties. Then, one departs (on the journey to Makkah). As at the end of life, the soul is emptied of all things of the world; if not, the journey will be troubled.

As the provisions for the road are made up of all kinds of things and all precautions are taken to prevent being destitute in the desert, so one must know that the desert of the Resurrection is longer and more fearsome. More provisions will be needed for that place. And as one does not take anything with one which spoils quickly—for one knows that it will not last and is not suitable for the desert—in the same any, provisions which are mixed with hypocrisy and stinting will not be suitable for the Hereafter.

When one sits on one's dromedary, one should remember the funeral bier and know with certainty that one's mount on that journey will be (the bier). It may be that before one descends from the camel, it will be the time for one's funeral. This journey must be for one as though it were the provision for that journey.

When one prepares the clothing of the Consecration as one nears that place where one will take off one's ordinary clothing and don the other—and these are (for the male) two pieces of white cloth like a waist-wrapper—one must think of one's shroud, for one's clothing on that journey, too, will be different from one's usual clothing in this world.

When one sees the passes and dangers of the desert, one must think of Munkar and Nakir<sup>570</sup> and the scorpions and serpents of the grave, for there is a vast desert between the grave and the Gathering, filled with many difficulties. Just as one will not find safety from the calamities of the desert without an escort, so one will not escape the terrors of the grave without the escort of obedience. And, as in the desert, one remains alone away family and children, so it will be in the grave.

When one begins to cry the Compliance, one know that this is the answer to the Cry of God, and the same kind of Cry will reach one on the Day of Resurrection. One thinks again of that awesomeness and one must be drowned in the momentousness of that cry. 'Ali bin al-Husayn<sup>571</sup> (R) turned pale at the time of the Consecration and began to tremble. He was not able to pronounce the Compliance. He was asked: "Why dost thou not say '*I am here at Thy service*'?" He replied: "I am afraid that if I say it, He will say: '*Not at My service and not by Thy two auspicious planets.*'"<sup>572</sup> When he said that, he fell from his camel and became unconscious.

Ahmad bin Abi al-Hawārī<sup>573</sup> was the disciple of Abu Sulayman Darani.<sup>574</sup> He related: "I was in the service of Abu Sulayman Darani. He did not utter the Compliance until he had gone a mile and fell unconscious. When he revived, he said: 'O Ahmad, God Most High revealed to Moses (A): Say to the oppressors of thy people that they should not use My name and not remember Me, for whoever remembers Me, I remember him. If they are oppressors, I remember them with

<sup>570</sup> The angels who interrogate the deceased in his grave.

<sup>571</sup> 'Ali bin al-Husayn: The fourth Imam of the Shi'ahs and surnamed Zayn al-Ābidin. He was noted for his piety and the poet Farazdaq wrote a celebrated ode about him. He died about AH94/712CE.

<sup>572</sup> The auspicious planets (nominative: *sa' dān*; oblique: *sa' dayn*): Venus and Jupiter.

<sup>573</sup> Ahmad bin Abi al-Hawārī: A disciple of Abu Sulayman Darani (see following Note). This would place him in the 3rd Islamic (9th CE) century.

<sup>574</sup> Abu Sulayman Darani: Abū Sulaymān 'Abd al-Rahmān bin Ahmad al-Dārānī. A native of Damascus, he was one of the earliest mystics and was influential in the formation of mystical doctrine. He died shortly after AH205/820CE.

curses.'" And (Ahmad bin Abi al-Hawari) said: "I heard that it is said to whoever pays for his Pilgrimage using funds from doubtful sources and then says: '*I am at Thy service*,' '*(There is) no at Thy service and no by Thy two auspicious planets until thou dost return what is in thy two hands.*'"

As for the Circumambulation and the Running, they resemble the going of the wretched to the courts of kings. They circle around the pavilion of the king until they find an opportunity to present their own request. They come and go inside the palace looking for some one to intercede for them. They hope that the eye of the king may suddenly fall upon them and see them. The space between Safa and Marwah is the likeness of that open space.

As for the Standing at 'Arafah and the congress of different kinds of people from all quarters of the world with their supplications in many languages, it resembles the fields of the Resurrection upon which all peoples will have been assembled, each person pre-occupied with himself and dumbfounded between rejection and acceptance (by God).

As for casting the stones, the purpose is the demonstration of servitude in the manner of pure worship. It also has a resemblance to (an act of) Abraham, the Friend (of God) (A) at that place where the devil came before him in order to cast him into doubt. (Abraham) cast stones at him. So, if thou thinkest: "Satan came to find him, but has not come to me; why should I throw stones for nothing?" know that this idea of thine has itself come from Satan! Throw the stones in order to break his back, for it will be broken by thine obedience (to God) and do everything thou art told to do! Abandon thine own control of self. Know truly that by this casting of stones thou art overcoming Satan.

This amount has been pointed out of the lessons of the Pilgrimage so that when a person comes to learn the way according to his purity of understanding, the strength of enthusiasm, and total effort in the affair, the like of these inner meanings may begin to appear to him and he may take a portion from each one. For, the life of his worship is with that and beyond the boundary of the outward appearance of things.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCERNING THE RECITATION OF THE QURAN

Know that the reading and recitation<sup>575</sup> of the Quran is the most meritorious of the acts of worship, especially when standing during formal prayer. The Messenger (S) said: "In my opinion the most meritorious of the acts of devotion is the recitation of the Quran." And he said: "Whoever has been given the blessing of the reading the Quran and thinks that some one has been given a thing which is greater than that which has been given him diminishes that which God Most High holds dear." And he said: "For instance, if the Quran is put in a skin and thrown into the fire, the fire does not approach it." And he said: "On the Day of Resurrection, there will be no intercessor with God Most High greater than the Quran; neither a prophet, nor an angel, nor any other." And he said: "God Most High says: 'I bestow the most meritorious of the rewards of the grateful to whoever reads the Quran after offering supplications.'"

And said the Messenger (S): "These souls become rusty, just as iron (does)!" They asked: "O Messenger of God, with what to do they become cleansed?" He answered: "With the recitation of the Quran and the remembrance of death." And he said: "When I have gone, I shall leave two preachers for you to give you wisdom: one speaks and the other is silent. The one which speaks is the Quran and the one which is silent is death."

Ibn Mas'ud says: "Read the Quran, for the reward from each of its letters<sup>576</sup> is that of ten good deeds. I do not say that *a-lam*<sup>577</sup> is one; *a* is one, *l* is one, and *m* is one."<sup>578</sup>

Ahmad Hanbal<sup>579</sup> (R) says: "I saw God Most High in a dream. I said: 'O Lord! What is the best way to approach Thee?' He answered:

<sup>575</sup> "Reading and recitation": The Persian word here, *khwāndan*, has the basic meaning of "reading," but is also used to mean recitation, chanting, singing, etc.

<sup>576</sup> The word for "letter" (*harf*) can also mean "word." Depending upon system of counting, there are between 6,204 and 6,239 words in the Quran. (Hughes) The number of letters would probably approach 40,000.

<sup>577</sup> *a-lam*: The first *a* is the interrogative particle and *lam* is the negative past particle. *A-lam* is frequently used in classical Arabic to start a negative question, as in Q. 105:1, about the past: "Did (I, you, he, we, etc.) not...?" Only consonants are counted as letters. *A-lam* contains three letters: "-l-m."

<sup>578</sup> Ibn Mas'ud is emphasizing that he is not talking about *harf* as a word, but rather as a letter, thus vastly multiplying the merit of reading the Quran.

<sup>579</sup> Ahmad (bin) Hanbal: the founder of the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence (born: AH164/780CE, died: AH241/855CE), one of the four great Sunni schools. He was persecuted by the Abbasid caliphs Ma'mun and Mu'tasim in the 3rd Islamic (9th CE) century. His work is the basis of law in modern Saudi Arabia.

'By My Word, the Quran.' I said: 'Even if I do not understand the meaning?' God replied: 'Even if thou dost not understand the meaning.'"

### THE RECITATION OF THE NEGLIGENT

Know that the degree of whoever learns to read the Quran is great. He must observe the sanctity of the Quran and safeguard himself against improper actions. He must observe the etiquette (of handling and reading the Quran) in all of his circumstances. If not, there is a fear that the Quran may become his antagonist. The Messenger (S) said: "Most of the hypocrites of my people are readers of the Quran."

Abu Sulayman Darani said: "The punishing angels grapple with the corrupt reciters of the Quran more quickly than with idolaters." In the Torah is written that God Most High says: "O My servant, hast thou no shame that if the letter of a brother reaches thee and thou art traveling, thou must either go to one side or sit down and read it word by word and reflect upon it? This, My Book, is a letter that I have sent to thee for reflection and acting upon. And thou turnest away from it and do not act upon it. And if thou recite it, thou dost not reflect upon what it is!"

Hasan Basri, may God have mercy upon him, says: "Those who were before you considered the Quran a missive that had come to them from God Most High. They would reflect upon it by night and act upon it by day. But ye have made of it an object of research. Ye correct its letters and vowel points, but disregard its commands."

To summarize, one must know that the purpose of the Quran is not merely recitation; rather, its purpose is action. Reading is necessary for learning, and learning is necessary for obeying. The person who does not implement it but continually reads it, articulating the words correctly, is like a slave who receives a letter from his master containing some orders for him. He sits and reads the letter tunefully, uttering the correct sounds, but he does not execute a single one of its commands. He certainly becomes deserving of loathing and punishment.

### THE RULES OF RECITATION: THE OUTWARD RULES

Outwardly, one must observe six rules:

*THE FIRST RULE* is to read respectfully. Before doing that, one should perform the purification. One should face the direction of prayer and sit humbly, as in formal prayer. 'Ali bin Abi Talib (R) says: "For every person who recites the Quran while standing in formal prayer, a hundred good deeds are recorded for each word (he utters). If he recites it while sitting in prayer, fifty are recorded; if he is in a purified state but not in prayer, twenty-five good deeds. If he is not in a state of purity, no more than ten good deeds are recorded." That which one recites at night,

especially during formal prayer, is more meritorious, for the soul is more untroubled and the merit greater.

*THE SECOND RULE* is that one should read slowly, meditating upon its meaning. One should not feel compelled to finish a complete reading.<sup>580</sup> Some hurry to read the complete text every day. The Messenger (S) says: "Whoever completes a recitation of the Quran in fewer than three days does not understand the law of the Quran." Ibn 'Abbas (R) says: "If I recite *The Earthquake* and *The Calamity*<sup>581</sup> slowly and with reflection, I like this better than reading *The Cow* and *The Family of the 'Imran*<sup>582</sup> rapidly." 'Ayishah (R) saw someone reading the Quran rapidly. She said: "Neither is he silent, nor is he a reader of the Quran." If a person is a non-Arab who does not understand the meaning of the Quran, it is again more meritorious to read slowly in order to preserve its sanctity.

*THE THIRD RULE* concerns weeping. The Messenger (S) says: "Read the Quran and weep. If tears do not come, take pains to bring them." Ibn 'Abbas says: "When performing the Prostration of Glorification,<sup>583</sup> do not hurry in the prostration until thou weep. If a person does not weep with his eyes, he must weep with his soul." The Messenger (S) said: "The Quran is for descending into contrition; when you read, make yourself contrite." Whoever meditates upon the Promise and the Threat<sup>584</sup> and the commands of the Quran, and comprehends his own helplessness will perforce become contrite, if indifference has not overwhelmed him."

*THE FOURTH RULE* is that one give each verse its due. The Messenger (S) said that whenever he reached a verse of punishment he would seek refuge (with God); whenever he reached a verse of mercy, he would attribute inviolability to God and praise Him. At the beginning (of his reading of the Quran), he would repeat the Seeking of Refuge<sup>585</sup> and when he left off, he would say: "*O God, have mercy upon me with the*

<sup>580</sup> A complete reading of the text of the Holy Quran from beginning to end is called a *khatam*. The text is divided into thirty parts (*juz'* or *pārah*) to facilitate the completion of a *khatam* in thirty days, especially during the nights of Ramadan.

<sup>581</sup> *The Earthquake* and *The Calamity*: These are the 99th and 101st chapters of the Quran, among the shortest.

<sup>582</sup> *The Cow* and *The Family of 'Imran*: Chapters 2 and 3 of the Quran; they are the two longest.

<sup>583</sup> the Prostration of Glorification (*sajdah-yi subhāna*): the prostration performed at certain fixed points in the text when reading the Quran.

<sup>584</sup> "the Promise and the Threat" (*wa'ad wa wa'id*): the Promise of paradise and the Threat of punishment.

<sup>585</sup> "the Seeking of Refuge" (*a'ūdhu billāh*): "I seek refuge with God..."

*Quran and make it a leader (imām), a light, a guidance, and a mercy. O God, cause me to remember that which I have forgotten and teach me that of which I was ignorant. Sustain me in the recitation during the times of night and day and make it a proof for me, O Lord of the worlds!*<sup>586</sup>

When reaching the verses of Prostration, one must prostrate oneself. First, one pronounces the Magnification; then, one prostrates oneself. One must observe the conditions of formal prayer; that is, the covering of the genitals<sup>586</sup> and obligatory purity. The Magnification and the Prostration is sufficient, without the Testimony and the Greeting.<sup>587</sup>

**THE FIFTH RULE** is that if there is something about hypocrisy in (the text), or if some other person performing formal prayer (nearby) will be disturbed, one should recite in a low voice, for it is related in the Traditions: “The superiority of private reading over reading aloud is like that of alms given in secret over those given in public.” But if one is secure from these,<sup>588</sup> it is preferred that one read in a loud voice so that another may derive a share (of the merit) by listening and so that he may also be better informed and his motivation more concentrated to increase his joy and startle him from sleep, and so that other sleepers may be roused. If all of these intentions are put together, each one receives a spiritual reward.

If one reads from the written text, it is more meritorious, because the eye also works. It has been said: “One complete reading of the Quran from the text is worth seven such recitations from memory.” One of the religious scholars of Egypt went to Shafi‘i and saw him prostrating himself, having laid down his copy of the Quran. (Shafi‘i) said: “The study of the law has diverted thee from the Quran and I am performing the early evening prayer.<sup>589</sup> I shall take the Book in my hand and not close it until daylight.”

The Messenger (S) passed by Abu Bakr who was performing formal prayer at night and reciting the Quran softly. He asked: “Why dost thou recite softly?” (Abu Bakr) replied: “It is listening to what I am saying.” (The Prophet) saw ‘Umar (R) reciting (the Quran) in a loud voice. (The Prophet) asked: “Why dost thou recite in a loud voice?” He said: “I am waking up the sleeping and driving away Satan.” (The Prophet) observed: “Both of you have done good.” Therefore, such actions are dependent upon the intention. As the intention for both was good, both will receive a spiritual reward.

<sup>586</sup> This dictum applies to males. For women, more of the body should be covered.

<sup>587</sup> That is, in this prostration, it is not necessary to recite the Testimony and give the final greeting (*salām*), right and left. See Chapter Four in this Book.

<sup>588</sup> “these”: hypocrisy and annoyance.

<sup>589</sup> That is, the early evening prayer, that which is called “*ishā*”.

*THE SIXTH RULE* is that one endeavor to recite in a pleasing voice, for the Messenger (S) says: "The Quran is adorned by good voices." The Messenger (S) came upon a freedman of Abu Hudhayfah<sup>590</sup> reciting the Quran in a pleasing voice. He said: "*Praise be to God who has made such as he in my people.*" The reason for this is that however much more the voice is pleasing, the effect upon the soul is greater. The practice of the Prophet was to read it as though in a prayer niche. However, excessive melodiousness between the words and letters is the custom of the minstrels,<sup>591</sup> which is disapproved.

#### (THE RECITATION OF THE QURAN:) THE INWARD RULES

The inward rules of recitation are also six:

*THE FIRST RULE* is that one be aware of the sublimity of the words, for they are the words of God, eternal, an attribute of His, existing through His essence; but that which (the reader) utters is words. Just as it is easy to pronounce "fire" with the tongue—and everyone is capable of doing that—yet one cannot endure the fire itself; so, neither the seven heavens nor the seven climes would have the power to support the manifestation of the true nature of the meanings of these words, should they be revealed.

It was about this that God Most High said: *If We had caused this Quran to descend upon a mountain, (O Muhammad) thou wouldest have seen it falling down, splitting asunder, out of fear of God.* (Q. 59:21) For the beauty and sublimity of the Quran is veiled with the cloak<sup>592</sup> of words, so that tongues and souls may have the strength to bear it. It would not be possible to deliver it to a person, save in the cloak of words. This is not evidence that behind these words there is not some vast affair. As it is not possible to drive, water, and command livestock by the word of man alone, for (animals) do not have the power to understand (words), it is necessary for one to make one's voice closer to that of the animals in order to make them understand (what is wanted from them). They hear the sound and do the work, not understanding the reason for it. A cow, upon the hearing the sound directed at it, treads the earth. It does not understand the reason for doing this, the purpose of

<sup>590</sup> In the *Revival*, the name of the freedman is given as Sālim. (HK) Abu Hudhayfah (Abu Hudhayfah in al-Mughirah), of the Makhzum clan, manumitted a slave by the name of 'Ammar bin Yasir who became his client and was mistreated by the Quraysh. Possibly, this is the freedman to whom Ghazzali is referring.

<sup>591</sup> "minstrels": *qawwālān*.

<sup>592</sup> Ghazzali uses the same word (*kiswar*) meaning "curtain, veil, cloak" that is used for the curtain that covers the walls of the Ka'bah.

which is to ventilate the soil and to mix water with both (the soil and air). When all three elements are collected together, it becomes possible for the earth to breathe, to feed the seeds, and to enable them to grow.

The benefit that most people derive from the Quran is no more than the sound and the external meaning, so that some suppose that the Quran is itself those words and sounds. This is the farthest limit of weakness and simplicity. It is as though a person imagines that the reality of fire lies in the letters *f*, *i*, *r*, and *e*,<sup>593</sup> and not realize that if (real) fire sees paper, it will burn it and the paper cannot survive it. However, these words are always on the paper, yet (the paper) is not affected.<sup>594</sup> As there is a spirit (*rūh*) for every body that does not remain with it, the meaning of the words is like the spirit, while the words are like the body. The nobility of the body is due to the spirit, and the nobility of the words is due to the spirit of their meanings. The explanation of all of the truth of what this signifies is not possible in a book such as this.

**THE SECOND RULE** is that one bring the sublimity of God Most High into one's soul—for these are His words—before reading the Quran and understand Whose words one is reading and that one sits in a sea of peril. One is always told: *No one touches it save the purified ones.* (Q. 56:79)

As it is not proper to touch the (physical) book except with pure hands, one should realize that the one cannot appreciate the true nature of the words of God except with a soul cleansed of the filth of bad character and adorned with the radiance of reverence and respect. It was for this that 'Ikramah,<sup>595</sup> upon opening the Book, would swoon and cry: "*It is the Word of my Lord! It is the Word of my Lord!*"

No one comprehends the sublimity of the Quran so long as he does not perceive the sublimity of God. When one makes present in one's soul the Throne, the Pedestal, the seven heavens and the seven climes and all that is between them of angels, jinn, man, beasts, insects, minerals, plants, and the categories of creation; and perceives that these are the Words of Him in Whose grasp are all of these (things)—all of which He would not shrink from destroying—and that there is no deficiency in His perfection, and that He is the Creator, Possessor, and

<sup>593</sup> Of course, we use the English here. Ghazzali writes *ātish* (fire) and uses the letters *alif*, *t*, and *sh*.

<sup>594</sup> That is, it does not burst into flame because of the written word "fire." Therefore, it is not real fire. In the same way, the reality of the Quran is not the bound copy; it is something other than that, resembling the relationship of the soul to the body.

<sup>595</sup> 'Ikramah: Abu 'Abdullah bin 'Abdullah 'Ikramah, a slave of Berber (North African) origin who was attached to the governor of Basrah. He became an authority on the Quran and Traditions of the Prophet. He died AH107/725-6CE.

Provider of all; then it will be that a slight notion of His sublimity will enter one's soul.

**THE THIRD RULE** is that the soul be focused and not distracted during the reading. The chatter of the self must not bear (the soul) away to extraneous things. One must understand that whatever is read negligently is not read (at all) and must be repeated. It is as though a person goes to admire a garden and is then diverted from its beauties so that later, when he comes out, he has gained nothing (of that). This Quran is the panorama of the believers. There are marvels and lessons in it from which, if one reflects upon them, one will not turn to anything else. Therefore, if a person does not know the inner significance of the Quran, he will profit only a little from it; however, he must bring its sublimity to his soul so that he not become disquieted.

**THE FOURTH RULE** is that one meditate upon the meaning of each word so that one may understand it. If one does not understand it with one reading, one should read it again; if one is delighted by it, one should read it again. This is preferable to (trying to) read a lot.

Abu Dharr Ghaffari<sup>596</sup> says: "The Messenger (S) repeated this verse a third of the night until morning: *If Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy servants; and if Thou forgive them, lo! Thou art Mighty (and) Wise.* (Q. 5:118) And he repeated *In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate* twenty times."

Sa'id bin Jubayr<sup>597</sup> spent a night on this verse: *Be distinguished this day, O guilty ones!* (Q. 36:59) If he read one verse and thought about the meaning of another, he would not have done justice to that verse. 'Amir bin 'Abd Qays<sup>598</sup> complained about inner distractions. They said it was the chatter of the world. He said: "If a knife is plunged into my chest, it would be less troublesome than my thinking about the chatter of the world while at prayer." But he considered the soul's being preoccupied with (thinking) "How shall I stand before God Most High at the Resurrection and how I shall return?" an inner distraction, because with every word that one recites during formal prayer, at that time one

<sup>596</sup> Abu Dharr Ghaffari: A companion of the Prophet. 'Ali bin Abi Talib said about him that he acquired knowledge until he became disabled, a statement that caused speculation. 'Ali added: "He was a miser and avaricious: a miser in his faith and avaricious in his knowledge." A major source of Traditions, he died AH32/652CE.

<sup>597</sup> Sa'id bin Jubayr: a great scholar of Kufah, executed by the notoriously able but harsh Umayyad governor of Iraq al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf (see Note 1161) in AH95-96/713CE.

<sup>598</sup> 'Amir bin 'Abd Qays: (al-'Anbari). A 1st Islamic (7th CE) century Follower and an ascetic of Basrah, he despised wealth and women and was note for his pious works. Denounced to Caliph 'Uthman—his puritanism led to suspicions of Kharijism, he was exiled to Damascus and probably died during the reign of Mu'awiyah (see Note 717). He is regarded by Sufis as one of the eight principal ascetics.

must not think of anything other than its meaning. When one is thinking of something else, even if it concerns religion, it is a distraction.

Indeed, in (reading) each verse, one must think of nothing other than its meaning, as when one reads the verses of the attributes of God Most High. One reflects about the mysteries of the attributes and the meaning of "Most Holy" (*Quddūs*), "Mighty" (*Azīz*), "Compelling" (*Jabbār*), "Majestic" (*Mutakabbir*), "Wise" (*Hakīm*), and the like. When one reads a verse of deeds, such as *He created the heavens and the earth*,<sup>599</sup> one understands the sublimity of the Creator from the marvels of creation and one recognizes the perfection of His knowledge and power, so that it happens that one sees God in whatever one looks upon, because one sees all (things as) in Him and one sees all (things as) from Him. When one reads this verse: *Surely We have created man from a drop of thickened fluid to test him*, (Q. 76:2) one ponders the wonders of the drop: How does a simple drop of liquid bring into being so many different things, such as flesh, skin, veins, bones, etc.? And how are the organs, such as hands and feet, head, eyes, tongue, etc., then created? And how do the marvels of the jewels of the understanding such as hearing, sight, life, etc., come into being?

It is difficult to explain all of the meanings of the Quran: the purpose of this is an admonition, in the manner of a meditation upon the Quran.

The meanings of the Quran will not appear to three persons: one is he who has not first read a superficial commentary and has not become acquainted with Arabic; another is the one who has become entrenched in great sins or has come to believe in heretical innovations which have darkened his soul; and the third is he who has studied theology<sup>600</sup> and remained in its outer form but who disapproves of all that passes over his soul contradicting it. It is not possible for such a person to penetrate more deeply than that surface.

**THE FIFTH RULE** is that one's soul should change its qualities as the meanings of the verses change. When coming upon a verse inspiring fear, one's soul turns wholly into fright and weeping. When one reaches a verse about mercy, expansive (joy) and delight appear in one's soul. When it hears the attributes of God Most High, it becomes the model of humility and weakness. When it hears the absurdities of the unbelievers in what they say about God Most High—such as His son and partners—one lowers his voice and reads with shame, modesty, and embarrassment. In this way, for each verse, there is a meaning, and that

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<sup>599</sup> This phrase occurs in a number of verses of the Quran, for example in 5:18.

<sup>600</sup> "theology": here Ghazzali uses the phrase *kalām-i i?tiqādī*.

meaning has a requirement. One must adopt that character in order to do justice to the verse.

*THE SIXTH RULE* is that one should listen to the Quran as though one were listening to God Most High and suppose that one is hearing it from Him. One of the great ones says: "I used to read the Quran, but did not receive its sweetness until I supposed that I was hearing it from the Messenger (S). I went more deeply and imagined that I was hearing it from Gabriel. I found the sweetness increased. Then I went (even) more deeply until I reached the greatest stage. Now, I read it as though I am hearing it from God Most High, without any intermediary, and I obtain a pleasure that I have never felt before."

## CHAPTER NINE: CONCERNING THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD MOST HIGH

Know that the object and core of all acts of worship are the remembrance of God Most High; that the buttress of Islam is obligatory formal prayer, the object of which is the remembrance of God Most High. As He said: *Surely (formal) prayer prevents lewdness and evil, and indeed the remembrance of God is greater (than all else).* (Q. 29:45)

Reading the Quran is the most meritorious of the acts of worship, for the reason that it is the word of God Most High. (Reading it) is remembering Him. All (things) in it—all cause a renewal of the remembrance of God, may He be praised and exalted. The object of fasting is the reduction of the carnal appetite so that the soul, liberated from the annoyance of the carnal appetites, may become purified and the abode of remembrance. For, when the soul is filled with carnal appetite, it is not possible to remember (Him); nor does (the remembrance) affect one. The object of the Greater Pilgrimage, which is a visit to the House of God, is the remembrance of the Lord of that House and the incitement of the longing for meeting Him.

Thus, the inner secret and the core of all of the acts of worship are remembrance. Indeed, the basis of Islam is the declaration: *There is no god but God.* This is the source of remembrance. All other acts of worship stress this remembrance. God's remembrance of thee is the fruit of thy remembrance of Him. What fruit could be greater than this? For this He said: *So remember Me, I shall remember you.* (Q. 2:152)

This remembrance must be continuous. If it is not continuous, it should be most of the time, for salvation is tied to it. For this, He said: *And remember God much; perhaps ye will be successful.* (Q. 62:10) He says that if ye have the hope of salvation, the key to that is much remembrance, not a little, and more frequently, not less.

And for this He said: *Those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying down...* (Q. 3:191) He praised these people because they do not neglect (remembrance) standing, sitting, lying down, or in any condition. And He said: *Remember thy Lord, (O Muhammad), within thyself humbly and with awe, in a soft voice, in the morning and in the evening, and be not of the neglectful.* (Q. 7:205) He said: "Remember Him with weeping, fear, and in concealment, morning and evening, and do not neglect (this) at any time."<sup>601</sup>

The Messenger (S) was asked: "What is the best of acts?" He answered: "That thou die with thy tongue moist with the remembrance of God Most High." And he said: "Should I not inform you of the best of

<sup>601</sup> This is Ghazzali's paraphrase of the Quranic verse.

your actions—the most acceptable to the King, may He be exalted—and your highest degrees, that which is better than giving alms of silver and gold, and better than shedding your blood in battle against enemies in defense of the faith?" They asked: "What is that, O Messenger of God?" He said: "*The remembrance of God.*" The remembrance of God Most High! And, he said: "Whomever the remembrance of me engages in the worshipful supplication of God, his gift is, in my opinion, greater and better than giving (alms) to beggars." And he said: "The rememberer of God Most High among the heedless is like a living person amongst the dead, or like a green tree amongst dead vegetation, or like the warrior for the faith who stands fighting amongst those fleeing."

Mu'adh (bin) Jabal (R) says: "The dwellers in Paradise regret nothing save the hour when they were in the world and did not remember God Most High."

#### THE TRUE NATURE OF REMEMBRANCE

Know that there are four degrees of Remembrance (of God):

*THE FIRST* is that it be with the tongue while the soul is inattentive. The effect of this is weak, but it is still not without some effect, for the tongue that is busy with service is better than the tongue that is busy with foolishness or left in idleness.

*THE SECOND* is that it be in the soul, but not established firmly and dwelling (in it). It is as though the soul must be constrained to do it, so that if there were no (conscious) effort and constraint, the soul would, from inattention and the whisperings of the self, revert to its normal nature.

*THE THIRD* is that in which the remembrance is resident, established, and dominant in the soul, so much so that there is no more need for importuning. This is tremendous!

*THE FOURTH* is that in which the Remembered—and that Is God Most High—overwhelms the soul, not the remembrance. There is a difference between him whose entire soul loves the Remembered and him who [loves]<sup>602</sup> the Remembrance. Rather, the perfection of that is that the remembrance and the awareness of the remembrance go from the soul, leaving the Remembered and nothing else. For, whether the remembrance be in Arabic or Persian, both of these are not devoid of the distracting whisperings of the self; on the contrary, they are the height of

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<sup>602</sup> From the AA text.

it. The point is that the soul should be emptied of Arabic and Persian and all else and, containing nothing else, turn to Him. This is the result of the singular love, which is called “ardent love.”<sup>603</sup> The ardent lover engages his soul entirely with his beloved. It may happen that his soul becomes so involved with the beloved that he forgets his own name.

When one becomes immersed thus, one forgets oneself and all there is, save God Most High. One arrives at the beginning of the way of mysticism. This state is called by the Sufis “annihilation (of the self).” It is also called “non-existence (of the self).”<sup>604</sup> All that is becomes non-existent from the remembrance of Him. (The rememberer), too, becomes non-existent, for he has forgotten himself. As there are for God Most High worlds of which we have no knowledge—nor are they our province, our existence is that of which we are aware and of which we have knowledge—when a person has forgotten these worlds which are the existence of creation, they have become his non-existence. And, when he has forgotten his own egotism, he too, has become non-existent with respect to his self. When nothing remains with him except God Most High, his existence is God and nothing else.

Just as when thou lookest at the sky and the earth and all that is in them, thou seest nothing more. Thou sayest: “The world itself is nothing more than this. This is all there is.” *That* person (the rememberer) sees nothing save God Most High and says: “He is everything; except for Him, there is no self.” At this place the separation between one and God departs and unity is achieved. This is the beginning of the world of Divine Unity and Oneness.<sup>605</sup> That is, when the separateness departs, one is not aware of separation and distance, for a person knows separation when he knows two things: himself and God. But this person is—in this state—unaware of his self and knows nothing other than the One! How could he comprehend separation?

Upon reaching this degree, the appearance of the empyrean begins to be unveiled before him and the spirits of the angels and the prophets start to disclose themselves to him in wondrous forms. That which is reserved to the Divine Presence starts to appear to him. Tremendous events reveal themselves, which cannot be described in words.

When he comes to himself and an awareness of things appears, their effect<sup>606</sup> stays with him. The ecstasy of that state overcomes him, the world, all that is in the world, and all that is created in it. A disquiet

<sup>603</sup> “ardent love”: *‘ishq*. This differs from the more general words for *love*, such as *hubb* and *mahabbah*. Not found in the Quran, *‘ishq* is derived from a root with a meaning of being joined together, entwined.

<sup>604</sup> “annihilation”: *fana* (Ar.); “non-existence”: *nisti* (Per.). They are virtually synonyms.

<sup>605</sup> “Oneness”: Ar. *Wahdāniyat*.

<sup>606</sup> “their effect”: the effect of the visions.

enters his soul. He is physically among people, but his soul is absent. He is astonished at people who are engaged in the activities of this world and he looks upon them with pity, for he knows what things they have missed and of which they have been deprived. But the people laugh at him! Why is he not engaged in the affairs of this world? They think that he may be mad or afflicted with some form of melancholia.

So, if a person does not achieve the stage of annihilation and non-existence and these states and disclosures do not appear to him—but the remembrance has overcome him—this is the *Alchemy of (Spiritual) Happiness*. For, since the remembrance (of God) has taken possession, familiarity and love have triumphed to the point that one loves God more than all the world and that which is in it. This is the foundation of (spiritual) happiness. Since his starting point and his ending point is with God, he will attain the perfection of pleasure at death. His witnessing will be in accordance with his love. For that person whose beloved is the world, his sorrow and pain at separation from it will be proportionate to his love for the world, as we have said in the Prolegomena.

Therefore, if a person remembers God much, but does not achieve these states of the Sufis, he should not become fearful, for this (spiritual) happiness is not suspended because of that. Since the soul has been adorned with the light of remembrance of God, it is prepared for perfect happiness. Everything that does not appear in this world will appear after death. One must always persevere in guarding the soul so that it confides in God and is never negligent. Continual remembrance is the key to the wonders of the Kingdom of the Divine Presence. That is the meaning of what the Messenger (S) said: “Whoever wishes to admire the gardens of Paradise, must remember God Most High much.”

From what we have indicated, it is plain that the core of all acts of worship is the remembrance of God. True remembrance is that which comes at the time one enjoins the good and prohibits the evil, and remembering God when one holds back at the time of committing a sin, and at the time one implements (God’s) commandments. If it happens that remembering Him is not like this, it is a sign that (the remembrance) is talking to oneself and does not have reality.

#### THE MERIT OF EXULTATION, GLORIFICATION, PRAISE, BLESSING, AND ASKING FORGIVENESS

*THE EXULTATION:*<sup>607</sup> The Messenger (S) says: “Every good deed performed by a servant (of God) is placed in the scales on the Day of Resurrection, except the utterance of *There is no god but God*. If this

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<sup>607</sup> The Exultation (*tahlil*): the declaration of “There is no god but God” (*lā ilāha illāllāh*).

were to be placed in the scales, it would exceed the seven heavens and the seven climes and all that is in them.” And he said: “The one who says *There is no god but God*, though he has sins in the amount of the soil of the earth, if he be sincere in it, he will be allowed to pass.” And he said: “Whoever has uttered *There is no god but God* with sincerity will go to heaven.” And he said: “For whoever says *There is no god but God, Alone, He is without any partner; to Him belongs the praise; He gives life and causes death; He is Omnipotent in all things* one hundred times a day, it is as though he had freed ten bondmen. One hundred good deeds are recorded for him in the register (of deeds), and one hundred bad deeds are erased. These words will be a refuge for him from Satan until the night.”

In the *Sahih*,<sup>608</sup> it is written that it will be for whoever recites these words as though he had freed forty bondmen of the descendants of Ishmael, (A).

**THE GLORIFICATION<sup>609</sup> AND THE PRAISING:**<sup>610</sup> The Messenger (S) says: “Whoever says one hundred times every day *Glory be to God and in His praise*,<sup>611</sup> all his sins will be forgiven, even if they are as great as the froth of the sea.” And he said: “Whoever, after every formal prayer, says *Glory be to God thirty-three times, Praise be to God*<sup>612</sup> thirty-three times, and *God is Greater*<sup>613</sup> thirty-three times and then finishes with a hundred-fold repetition of *There is no god but God, Alone, He is without any partner; to Him belongs the sovereignty and to Him belongs all praise; He gives life and causes death; and he is Omnipotent in all things*—he will have his sins forgiven, even if they are as great as the froth of the sea.”

It is narrated that a man came to the Messenger (S) and said: “My world has collapsed. I am in difficult straits and penniless. I am destitute. What should I do?” He said: “Where art thou with respect to blessing the angels and glorifying creatures by which sustenance is obtained?” He replied: “What are they, O Messenger of God?” He said: “*Glory be to God Almighty, glory be to God with His praise, I ask forgiveness of God.*” Say this one hundred times every day after performing the early morning obligatory formal prayer, after the dawn, until the world turns toward thee, whether it wishes to or not. From each word, God Most High creates an angel who continually glorifies (Him) until the Resurrection and the spiritual reward of that is thine.”

<sup>608</sup> *Sahih*: a reference to the book of Traditions of the Prophet collected by Bukhari.

<sup>609</sup> The Glorification (*tasbih*): the declaration of ‘Glory be to God (*subḥānallāh!*)’

<sup>610</sup> The Praising (*tahmid*): The declaration of ‘Praise be to God (*alhamdu lillāh!*)’

<sup>611</sup> “*Glory be to God and in His praise*”: Ar. *Subḥān-allāh wa bi-ḥamdihi*.

<sup>612</sup> “*Praise be to God*”: Ar. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh*.

<sup>613</sup> “*God is greater*”: Ar. *Allāhu akbar*.

And the Messenger (S) said: "The lasting good deeds<sup>614</sup> are these words: *Glory be to God and praise be to God and there is no god but God and God is greater.*" And he said: "I prefer saying these words more than all that is under the course of the sun." And he said: "The most beloved words to God Most High are these four." And he said: "Two words are light on the tongue but heavy in the scales and beloved by the Lord of the world: *Glory be to God and with His praise* and *Glory be to God Almighty.*" The poor said to the Messenger (S): "The rich have carried off all the reward of the Hereafter, for whatever we do in worship, they do also, and they give alms, while we are not able to." He said: "For you, because of your poverty, every glorification, exultation, and magnification (that you utter) is alms. Every command to do good and every prevention of bad deeds are likewise (alms). If one of you puts food in the mouth of a member of his family, that is alms."

Know that the virtue of the glorifications, praisings, and exultations uttered by the poor person is greater, because the souls of the poor are not darkened by the gloom of the world and are purer. One of his words is like a seed that falls on clean earth; it is very effective and produces much fruit. Remembrance in a soul filled with the appetite for the world is like a seed that falls on saline earth; it has little effect.

**THE BLESSING:** One day the Messenger (S) came out appearing very happy. He said: "Gabriel (A) came and said: 'Congratulations! God Most High says: 'Art thou not content with the fact that when one of thy people gives thee blessings,<sup>615</sup> I give him ten blessings, and when he greets thee with *Peace* once, I greet him ten times, and that the angels and heavenly host do the same?'''"

The Messenger (S) said: "All the angels send blessings to whoever sends blessings to me; indeed, whether it to be much or a little." He said: "The priority for me is that person who sends me many blessings." And he said: "Whoever sends a blessing to me will have ten good deeds recorded for him and ten bad deeds erased from him." And he said: "For him who sends blessings upon me when writing something, the angels ask forgiveness so that my name may be written in that book."

**ASKING FORGIVENESS:** Ibn Mas'ud (R) says: "In the Quran, there are two verses for which, if someone who has committed a sin reads, his sin will be forgiven: *And those who, when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves, remember God and implore forgiveness for their sins*—(who

<sup>614</sup> "lasting good deeds" (*bāqiyāt-i sālihāt*)": a reference to a phrase in a verse in *Sūrah al-Kahf* (*The Cave*): *Wealth and children are an ornament of life of the world. But the enduring good deeds are better in thy Lord's sight for reward (thawāb), and better in respect of hope.* (Q. 18:46)

<sup>615</sup> "blessings": Ar. *salawāt*.

*forgives sins save God?—and will not knowingly repeat what they did); (Q. 2:135)<sup>616</sup> Yet, whoso does evil or wrongs his own soul, then seeks pardon of God, will find God Forgiving, Merciful. (Q. 4:110)*

God Most High says to the Messenger (S): *So glorify thy Lord with praise and ask forgiveness of Him; truly, He is Ever-returning (to mercy). (Q. 110:3)* The Messenger (S) has said much in this regard: *“Glory be to Thee, O God, and with Thy praise. O God, forgive me; truly, Thou art Ever-returning (to mercy), Merciful.”*

And the Messenger (S) said: “Whoever asks for forgiveness much will find comfort in every affliction and liberation in every stricture. His sustenance will come from a place of which he never imagined.” And he said: “I ask for forgiveness seventy times every day.” If *he* did this, it is clear that for other people, they must never cease doing so. And he said: “Whoever when going to sleep says three times: *“I ask forgiveness of God, than Whom there is no other God, the Living, the Eternal”* will be forgiven all of his sins, even though they are in the amount of the froth of the sea, the sands of the desert, the leaves of the trees, or the days of the world.” And he said: “No person commits a sin that will not be forgiven if he purifies himself, performs two bows of formal prayer, and asks forgiveness.”

#### THE RULES OF SUPPLICATION

Know that supplicating (God) with humility and weeping is one of the things that bring one near (to Him). The Messenger (S) says: “Supplication is the marrow of worship.” This is because the purpose of worship is humble veneration.<sup>617</sup> Humble veneration is in that in which one sees both the fragility of oneself and the greatness of God and knows it. Both of these appear in supplication. However more one is humble, the better it is. One must observe eight rules:

*FIRST:* One should strive to do it at a noble time, such as ‘Arafah, Ramadan, Friday, the pre-dawn, and during the night.

*SECOND:* One should observe the exalted occasions, such as—for the warriors of the faith—at the time of forming battle lines against the unbelievers, when it rains, and the time of obligatory formal prayer. For it is related in the Traditions that the gates of the heavens are thrown open at these times. The same (is true) for the time between the call to obligatory formal prayer and the call to assemble in lines, and when one

<sup>616</sup> The portion of this verse that Ghazzali has omitted, substituting an “etc.,” is given in full between the parentheses.

<sup>617</sup> Both key Arabic words in this sentence, *‘ibādat* (worship) and *‘ubūdiyat* (humble veneration), come from the same root (*‘-b-d*) with the meaning of worship, serving, venerating, adoring, and also slavery and bondage.

is fasting, and when the soul is tender, for the tenderness of the soul is a sign of the opening of the Gate of Mercy.

**THIRD:** One should raise both hands at the conclusion (of the supplication) and pass them down the face, for in the Traditions it is related: "God Most High is too generous to allow a hand raised to Him to return empty." The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever supplicates will not be devoid of three things: either his sins will be forgiven, or some good will come to him immediately, or some good will come to him in the future."

**FOURTH:** One should not supplicate doubtfully; rather, the soul should be convinced that its plea will certainly be answered, for the Messenger (S) has said: "*Supplicate God when ye are certain of being answered.*"

**FIFTH:** One should supplicate with weeping, entreating, humility, and the presence of the soul, for it is related in the Traditions: "The supplication of the negligent soul is not heard."

**SIXTH:** One should be persistent in prayer and supplication, repeating them continually and determinedly. One should not say: "I have supplicated God many times, but He has not answered." God better knows the appropriate time for answering a supplication. When one receives one's answer, it is the practice of the Prophet to say: "*Praise be to God by Whose favor good works are accomplished.*" When the response is delayed, one should say: "*Praise be to God in all conditions.*"

**SEVENTH:** One should first glorify God and give blessings (to the Prophet). The Messenger (S) used to say before his supplications: "*Glory be to my Lord, the Exalted, the Munificent.*" And he has said: "Whoever wishes to supplicate God should first give me his blessings so that he may certainly be answered. God Most High is too generous to grant one of two supplications and refuse the other."

**EIGHTH:** One should repent, abandon injustice, and bring one's soul totally to God Most High; for most rejected supplications are due to the inattention of souls and the darkness of sins.

Ka'b al-Ahbar<sup>618</sup> says: "Once there was famine among the Children of Israel. Moses (A) with all his people prayed for rain three times, but without result. Revelation came upon Moses that there was a talebearer amongst his people. As long as he was among them, the supplication would not be answered. Moses said: 'Indeed, O Lord, who is that person so that I may expel him?' God replied: 'I have forbidden talebearing among you. How could I bear tales?' Moses said: 'We shall

<sup>618</sup> Ka'b al-Ahbār: originally a Jew from Southern Arabia, he converted to Islam during the reign of the second caliph, 'Umar (see Note 299). He was with 'Umar when he entered Jerusalem AH17/638CE and Ka'b pointed out the site of the Temple to 'Umar. Though suspected of Judaizing tendencies, he was regarded as a considerable authority on the stories of the prophets and tribal traditions. (EJ, etc.) He died AH32/625CE.

repent for talebearing and slander.' They all repented and rain began to fall."

Malik Dinar<sup>619</sup> says: "Once there was a famine among the Children of Israel. They came out to perform the prayer for rain many times, but (their supplications) were not accepted. Then it was revealed to their prophet: 'Tell them that they have come out and supplicated with their impure bodies and their bellies filled with that which is unlawful and their hands polluted with the blood of the innocent. With this coming out (for prayer) My anger against you was increased and ye have become more distant from Me.'"

#### MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLICATIONS

Know that are many supplications handed down<sup>620</sup> that were uttered by the Messenger (S). It is the Practice of the Prophet to recite these in the early morning and the evening, and after obligatory formal prayers, and at other times. We have collected many of them in *The Revival* and cited some of the better ones in the book *The Beginning of the Guidance*.<sup>621</sup> If anyone wishes to do so, he may learn them from those volumes, for writing them out in this book would be lengthy. Most of them are well known and everyone has learned something of them.

However, there are a few supplications which occurred in events and in acts that were performed that are of the Practice of the Prophet. These are less frequently learned. We cite them here so that they may be learned and their significance understood. Each one is recited at its proper time so that the servant may not be neglectful of God at any time and lacking in humility and supplication.

When leaving the house, one must say: "*In the name of God, my Lord, I seek refuge with Thee lest I go astray or cause (another) to go astray, or oppress (someone) or be oppressed, or do something foolish or have something foolish done to me. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful; there is no power and no strength except in God. I entrust myself to God.*"

When entering a mosque, one should say: "*O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad and grant them salvation. O*

<sup>619</sup> Malik Dinar: Mālik bin Dīnār al-Sāmī, Abū Yahyā. The son of a slave, he became a disciple of Hasan al-Basri (see Note 398) and became well known for his piety and learning. He died soon after AH124/740CE, about ninety years old. *Al-Fihrist* gives his death as AH130/747-8CE, while Ibn al-'Imad gives it as AH127/744-5CE. (EI)

<sup>620</sup> "handed down" (*ma'thūr*): in this case, handed down by report from the Prophet and the Companions. These are at a level lower than the Traditions which have provenances that go back directly to the Prophet and the Companions.

<sup>621</sup> "*The Beginning of the Guidance*" (*Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*): This is No. 35 on HK's list of the works of Ghazzali, written between *The Revival* and *The Alchemy of Happiness*.

*God, forgive me my sins and open the gates of Thy mercy unto me.” Enter with the right foot first.*

When seated in an assembly and the talk becomes distracted, the expiation of that is that one say: “*Glory be to Thee, O God, and in Thy praise. I testify that there is no god except Thou. I ask forgiveness from Thee and I turn to Thee in repentance. I have done evil and I have wronged my self, so forgive me my sins, truly there is no one to forgive them except Thou.*”

When entering the marketplace, one should say: “*There is no god but God, Alone; He has no partner. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise. He gives life and causes death. He is Living and does not perish. All goodness is in His hand. He is Omnipotent over everything.*”

When putting on new clothes, one should say: “*O God, Thou hast garbed me in this clothing; all praise is Thine. I ask Thee for its goodness and the goodness which is made for it. I seek refuge with Thee from its evil and the evil which is made for it.*”

When seeing (the crescent of) the new moon,<sup>622</sup> one should say: “*O God, cause it to shine upon us in security, faith, security, and Islam, my Lord and thy Lord is God.*”

When the wind rises, one should say: “*O God, truly I ask Thee for the goodness of this wind and the goodness that is within it, and the goodness that Thou hast sent with it. We seek refuge with God from its badness and the badness that is within it, and the badness that Thou hast sent with it.*”

When one hears the news of someone’s death, one should say: “*Glory be to Living One Who does not die; truly we belong to God and to Him we are returning.*”

When giving alms, one should say: “*Our Lord, accept this from us. Truly Thou are the All-hearing, the All-Knowing.*”

When suffering a loss, one should say: “*It may be that Our Lord will give us better than this in its place. Lo! we beseech Our Lord!*” (Q. 68:32)

When looking at the sky, one should say: “*Our Lord! Thou didst not create this in vain. Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the torment of the fire. (Q. 3:191) Blessed be He Who hath placed in heavens the mansions of the stars, and made in them a great lamp and a shining moon.*” (Q. 25:61)

When hearing thunder, one should say: “*Glory be to Him Whom the thunder glorifies with His praise, and (so do) the angels for awe of Him.*” (Q. 13:13) When lightning flashes, one should say: “*O God, do not kill us with Thine anger and do not destroy us with Thy punishment.*”

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<sup>622</sup> While in the West the new moon occurs when it is not yet visible in the sky, in the Islamic world it is the first appearance of the crescent of the new moon.

*Forgive us before that.*" When it rains, one should say: "*O God, make it a salubrious draught and a beneficial sprouting; make it the cause of mercy and do not make it the cause of torment.*"

When angry, one should say: "*O God, forgive me my sin and make my anger pass from my heart. Give me sanctuary from Satan the accursed.*"

When frightened of fearful, one should say: "*O God, truly we shall strike their breasts with Thy (help). We see refuge with Thee from their evil.*"

When some part (of the body) hurts, one should place one's hand upon it and say: "*In the name of God (thrice), I seek refuge with God and His power from the evil that I find and fear;*" (seven times).

When sorrow touches one, one should say: "*There is no god but God, the High, the Wise. There is no god but God, the Great Lord of the Throne.*"

When is perplexed about something, one should say: "*Truly I am Thy servant and a son of Thy servant and a son of Thy (female) servant. My forelock<sup>623</sup> is in Thy hand; Thy decree is executed in me. I beseech Thee with every name that Thou dost call Thyself, or that Thou hast revealed in Thy Book, or hast given to one of Thy created beings, or hast reserved in Thy secret knowledge; that Thou makest the Quran the springtime of my heart, the light of my breast, the departure of my distress, and the passing of my anxiety.*"

When looking in a mirror, one should say: "*Praise be to God Who has created me. How good is my creation. He has formed me; how good is my form.*"

When purchasing a bondman, one should put one's hand on his forehead and say: "*O God, truly I ask Thee for goodness from him and goodness from his disposition. I seek refuge with Thee from his badness and the badness of his disposition.*"

When going to sleep, one should say: "*My Lord, I have lain down in Thy name and I shall rise in Thy name. This is my soul which Thou wilt receive. Its death is Thine, as is its life. If Thou detainest it, then forgive it; if Thou sendest it back, then protect it with that which Thou dost protect Thy just servants.*"

When waking, one should say: "*Praise be to God Who gives us life after our death; the Return is to Him. We and the world belong to God; greatness and sovereignty belong to God. Honor and power are God's. We have been born in the nature of Islam<sup>624</sup> and the word of sincere devotion, and the religion of our Prophet Muhammad, upon*

<sup>623</sup> "forelock": a metaphor for mastery and control.

<sup>624</sup> That is, we are born in Islam, the natural religion; parents and social circumstances may lead us, as children, away from Islam.

*whom be the blessings and mercy of God, and the nation of our father Abraham in true belief, who was never one of the polytheists."*

## CHAPTER TEN: CONCERNING THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE PERIODS OF PRIVATE WORSHIP

From what we have said in the Prolegomena, it is clear that a person is sent into this strange world, the world of water and earth, to do business; otherwise, the true nature of his soul is celestial and has come from that place and will return to it. In this business, his capital is his life span, and it is a capital that is constantly decreasing. If he does not derive benefit and profit at every breath, the capital is wasted and he will be ruined. About this, God Most High said: *By the declining day! Verily man is in loss, save those believe and do good deeds and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to patience.* (Q. 103:1-3)

His parable is the man whose capital is ice. He displays it during the summer for sale. He continually cries: "O Muslims, have pity on him whose capital is melting." In the same way, the capital of life is always melting away, for all of our life is a limited number of breaths in the knowledge of God Most High. Therefore, the persons who have perceived this fact are watchful of their breaths, for they have understood that each one is a jewel that may net them eternal happiness. They are more concerned for that than a person is for his capital of gold and silver. It was for this concern that they divided the times of the night and day by pious acts, assigned a time for everything, and established the various periods for private worship.<sup>625</sup>

However, the periods of private worship were instituted so that none of their time would be wasted, for they knew that that person attains the (spiritual) happiness of the Hereafter who leaves the world while the intimacy and love of God Most High dominates him. There is no intimacy without constant remembrance, nor love without spiritual knowledge, and spiritual knowledge may not be acquired save through meditation. Consequently, being assiduous in remembrance is the seed of (spiritual) happiness. One must abandon the world and abandon the carnal appetites and sinning in order to obtain the tranquillity of remembrance and thought. There are two methods of continual remembrance:

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<sup>625</sup> "periods of private worship" (pl. Per. *wird-hā* or Ar. *awrād*, sing. *wird*): a specified time of the day or night devoted to private worship, over and above the five obligatory formal prayers. In this context, these are set phrases used to focus the mind during meditation through repetition, somewhat akin to the rosary of the Roman Catholics. *Wird* originally meant a watering place, or the coming of the animals to a watering place. As this was usually done the same time each day, the word came to be used to private devotions and meditation, in addition to the obligatory prayers, at set times during the day and night. From this, it also came to mean the words and phrases used at such times. See *Wird* in SEI, et al.

ONE is to constantly repeat “God! God!” (*Allāh! Allāh!*), with the soul (*dil*), not with the tongue. Indeed, one should not (even) say it with the soul, for this uttering is like talking to oneself. Rather, one must be continually in a state of witnessing so as never to be inattentive. However, this is very impracticable and difficult. Not everyone has the strength for this—that one’s soul have a single quality and a single state—for people become bored with doing this. For this reason, many different private devotions have been posited. Some have a fixed form, such as formal prayer, and some are oral, such as reading the Quran and the Glorification;<sup>626</sup> others are with the soul,<sup>627</sup> such as meditation and reflection—lest one become bored. So, at every moment, there is something different to do; in the change from one state to another, there is a rest.

THE OTHER WAY is to set aside periods during (the time) which one must spend for the necessities of the world. The reality is that if one does not use all of his time for the work of the Hereafter, one should at least use most of it so that the pan of the scale for good deeds may preponderate. If one spends one half of one’s time in the world and enjoyment of lawful pleasures and one half in religious work, it may be that the other pan (for bad deeds) will become weightier, for one’s natural inclination will assist in all that it deems suitable, and the effort of the soul in religious activities may be contrary to one’s nature, so that sincerity in (the religious activities) becomes difficult. Without sincerity, all that is done is profitless. Many deeds are needed for one (of them) to be performed with sincerity.

Therefore, more time should be given to religious activities, with worldly affairs secondary. It was for this that the Messenger (S) said, quoting the Word of God Most High: (*Glorify Him*) *during the hours of the night and parts of the day that thou mayest be well pleased.* (Q. 20:130) And He said: *And remember the name of thy Lord morning and evening; and during part of the night prostrate (thyself) to Him and glorify Him throughout the long night.* (Q. 76:25-6) And He said: *And they used to sleep but little at night.* (Q. 51:17)

All of these references agree that one should busy oneself most of the time with God Most High. This cannot be accomplished without a division of the times of night and day. Consequently, a discussion of this is necessary and inescapable.

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<sup>626</sup> “Glorification” (*tasbīh*): This is a devotion usually accompanied by the telling of beads or counting on the fingers, most often performed after a formal prayer.

<sup>627</sup> That is, silently.

### DISCLOSING THE PERIODS OF THE DAY

Know that there are five such periods during the day:

**THE FIRST PERIOD** is from the pre-dawn to the rising of the sun. This is a noble time, for God Most High swears an oath by it, saying: *And the morning when it brightens.* (Q. 81:18) And He said: *Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn.* (Q. 113:1) *He is the Cleaver of the daybreak.* (Q. 6:96) All are about this: that one should guard all of his breaths at this time.

When awakening from sleep, one should say: *Praise be to God Who gives us life after our death; the Return is to Him* and the supplication that has already been given.<sup>628</sup> One should put on one's clothes while engaging in remembrance and supplication. While putting on clothing, one should declare the intention of concealment of the privates, conform to the rules, and be wary of hypocrisy and frivolity. Then, one should go to the privy, placing the left foot first. After that, one should perform the lesser ablution and clean the teeth with all the remembrances and supplications we have previously described.<sup>629</sup> One should perform the traditional (formal prayer) of the morning,<sup>630</sup> then, repair to the mosque, for this is what the Messenger (S) used to do. After the traditional prayer one should learn and recite the supplication that Ibn 'Abbas related, as we have cited in *The Beginning of the Guidance*.

Then, one goes to the mosque slowly and enters with the right foot first; one should recite the Supplication of Entrance<sup>631</sup> and make for the first prayer line. If one has not already performed the voluntary prayer of the Practice of the Prophet at home, one should do so now. If one has performed it at home, one should perform the "Greeting to the Mosque" formal prayer<sup>632</sup> and then, while glorifying God and asking His forgiveness, wait for the congregational obligatory formal prayer to begin. When the obligatory formal prayer has been performed, one should sit until the sun rises, for the Messenger (S) says: "*I love sitting in the mosque until the sun rises more than freeing four slaves.*"

Until the sun rises, one should engage oneself in four kinds of remembrance: supplication, glorification, reading the Quran, and meditation.

Upon giving the final salutation (*salām*) of the obligatory formal prayer, one should begin offering supplications and say: "*O God, bless*

<sup>628</sup> See end of previous chapter, Chapter Nine.

<sup>629</sup> See Chapter Three of this Pillar.

<sup>630</sup> This is not the obligatory pre-dawn formal prayer, but a prayer of two bows from the Practice of the Prophet (*sunnah*) before the obligatory formal prayer.

<sup>631</sup> "Supplication of Entrance": *Du'a-yi Dukhūl*.

<sup>632</sup> "Greeting to the Mosque" (*tahiyyat-i Masjid*): a formal prayer of two bows.

*Muhammad and the people of Muhammad. O God, Thou art Peace, and from Thee is peace, and to Thee peace shall return. Preserve us in peace. Our Lord, cause us to enter the House of Peace. May Thou be praised, O Lord of Majesty and Liberality!"* Then one begins to recite the traditional supplications, which may be learned from *The Revival and Supplications*.

When one has finished the supplications, one should commence the glorifications and the exultations.<sup>633</sup> Each one should be repeated one hundred, seventy, or ten times. When one says ten (different) remembrances, each one ten times, it makes one hundred. Fewer than this is not suitable. There are many traditions about the merit of these ten remembrances that we have not related in order not to prolong the matter:

First: *There is no God but God, Alone; He has no partner. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise. He gives life and causes death. He is Living and does not die. All goodness is in His hand. He is Omnipotent over everything.*

Second: *There is no god but God, the King, the Obvious Truth.*

Third: *Glory be to God and praise be to God. There is no god but God. God is Greater. There is no power and no strength save with God, the Most High, the Almighty.*

Fourth: *Glory be to God the Almighty and with His praise.*

Fifth: *The Most Glorious, the Most Holy, Lord of the angels and the spirit.*

Sixth: *I ask forgiveness of God, there is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal. I beseech Him to turn to me.*

Seventh: *O Living, O Eternal, I appeal to Thy mercy. Do not entrust me to myself even for a blinking of the eye. Improve my affair for me, all of it.*

Eighth: *O God, there is no hindrance to what Thou givest; there is no giver for what Thou hast prevented. Diligence does not profit the fortunate in Thee.*<sup>634</sup>

Ninth: *O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad.*

Tenth: *In the name of God by Whose name no harm comes to anything in the earth or in the heavens. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.*

These ten utterances should be uttered ten times, or as many as one is able; for in each one, there is a different virtue, and in each one, there is a different pleasure and affection.

After this, one should recite<sup>635</sup> the Quran. If one has not memorized (all of it), one should learn and recite the Quranic portions

<sup>633</sup> "the exultations" (*tahlil*): that is, saying "There is no god but God" (*lā ilāha illā-llāh*).

<sup>634</sup> That is, all comes from God. Without His allotting something, it will not come. The effort of the diligent does not bring good fortune, the decree of God does.

about the calamities, such as the *Verse of the Throne* (Q. 2:255), *The Messenger believes...* (Q. 2:285), *God bears witness...* (Q. 3:17), *Say: O God, Owner of the kingdom* (Q. 3:25), and the first (*it*) *glorifies*—Surah Iron (Q. 57), and the last (*it*) *glorifies*—Surah Banishment (Q. 59).<sup>635</sup>

And if something comprehensive is wanted from the Quran and the remembrance of God, one should recite that which Khidr<sup>637</sup> (R) taught Ibrahim Taymi<sup>638</sup>—in the revelations which came to him—for there is much excellence in them. They are called *Musabba'at 'Ashar*.<sup>639</sup> They are ten things, each of which is to be repeated seven times: “The Praise,” (Q. 1) the two “Seeking Refuges,” (Q. 113 & 114) “Sincerity,” (Q. 112) “The Unbelievers,” (Q. 109) and the Verse of the Throne. (Q. 2:255) These six are from the Quran. The other four are remembrances:

One: *Glory be to God, praise be to God, there is no God but God. God is Greater.*

Next: *O God, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad.*

Next: *O God, forgive the Muslims, male and female.*

Next: *O God, forgive me and my parents and have mercy upon them both. Do with me and with them, now and in the future, in religion, the world, and the Hereafter that which befits Thee; do not do to us, O our Protector, that which befits us. Truly, Thou are Forgiving and Merciful.* Concerning the merit of this, there is a long story, which has been related in *The Revival*.

When this has been done, one should occupy oneself in meditation. There is much scope for meditation and it will be discussed at the end of this book. However, that which is important every day is that one reflect upon death, life, and the inevitability of death and say to oneself: “No more than one day remains until death.” The benefit

<sup>635</sup> “recite”: or “read.”

<sup>636</sup> The Quranic chapters *Iron* (*al-Hadid*) (Q. 57) and *Banishment* (*al-Hashr*) (Q. 59). Both begin with the word *sabbaha* “(it/he/they) glorify/glorifies.”

<sup>637</sup> Khidr (*Khidr*): an epithet meaning “the green man.” It is popularly associated with a mysterious figure whom Moses encounters on a journey and with whom he travels. The story may be found in Q. 18:60-82. This encounter has been much elaborated upon in commentaries and popular tradition. There are many similarities between Khidr and the Elijah figure of later Jewish tradition. With Jesus, Idris, and Elijah, he is (in tradition) one of the four persons who have not tasted death. It is interesting to speculate about any possible connection between Khidr and the mysterious Green Knight encountered by Sir Gawain in Arthurian legend. Khidr and the Journey of Moses are discussed in the translator’s *The Old Testament: An Islamic Perspective*. It is also available in *Moses: An Islamic Perspective*, extracted from the former volume.

<sup>638</sup> Ibrahim Taymi: Ibrahim Abu Isma’ bin Yazid al-Taymi. He was a Murji'i ascetic of Kufah who died in AH92/710-711CE. The Murji'ites (the Procrastinators) held that no judgment of a true believer who had been guilty of serious sins would be made, either in this or the next, until the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, they neither condemned nor absolved such a person.

<sup>639</sup> *Musabba'at 'Ashar*: The Ten Sevens.

of this meditation is enormous, for the people have turned their faces to the world and that is from the length of aspiration. But if one knew with certainty that he would die in a month or next year, he would flee all that occupies him now! It may be that they will die in a day, yet they are busy arranging affairs for ten years in the future that will never come to pass! It is for this that God Most High said: *Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and what things God has created, and that it may be that their own term draws nigh? In what fact after this will they believe?* (Q. 7:185)

After one has cleansed one's soul and has meditated upon this, the desire to prepare the provisions for (the journey to) the Hereafter pulsates in the soul. One must reflect that, in these few days, one will be able prepare something for it and he must guard against all that is sinful. One must make amends for the offenses he has committed in the past. All of this requires preparation and thought.

So, if the way is opened for some person to peer into the kingdom of heaven and earth and to gaze upon the marvels of creation, perchance to view the majesty and beauty of the Divine Presence, this thought is superior to all acts of worship and all (other) contemplations are inferior to it. For with this, the reverence of God Most High conquers the soul. So long as this reverence does not overwhelm one, love does not prevail and the perfection of (spiritual) happiness will not be achieved. The perfection of (spiritual) happiness lies in the perfection of love, but this is not east for just any person.

Moreover, there must be an exchange for this which is that one reflect upon the blessings one has received of God Most High and upon the afflictions of the world such as sickness, poverty, and the like, among the chastisements from which one has been delivered in order to realize that one is obliged to be thankful. Thankfulness is that one implement the commandments (of God) and avoid sins. In short, one should spent some time in this meditation after the appearance of the dawn, when there is no other formal prayer except the obligatory and traditional formal prayers of dawn until the sun rises, for in place (of the formal prayer) is remembrance and thought.

THE SECOND PERIOD is from the appearance of the sun until mid-morning. If possible, one should remain in the mosque glorifying God until the sun rises to height of a spear's length above the horizon, until the time in which formal prayer is disapproved passes. Then, one should perform a formal prayer of two bows. When it is the fullness of the mid-morning, that is when one quarter of the day has elapsed, then the mid-morning formal prayer is more meritorious. One should perform four, six, or eight bows, as there are traditions about all of these

(numbers).<sup>640</sup> When the sun is high and these bows have been performed, busy oneself with things that are connected with people, such as visiting the sick, accompanying a funeral procession, taking care of the needs of Muslims, or attending some edifying assembly.

THE THIRD PERIOD is from the mid-morning until the time of the noon prayer. This period is different for different people and is not devoid of four states:

The first state is that one is capable of studying. There is no worship superior to this. On the contrary, it is preferred that a person who is able to do so should occupy himself with study after performing the obligations of the early morning. However, one should study some field of knowledge that is beneficial for the Hereafter, a field of study that weakens the desire for the world, increases the desire for the afterlife, reveals the defects and calamities of deeds, and invites (people) to salvation. On the other hand, the study of disputation, debate, the study of tales, and admonishment (from the pulpit)—in which art and rhymed prose are mixed together—all such things increase the greed for the world and sow the seeds of envy and licentiousness in the soul. Beneficial knowledge has been collected in the volumes of *The Revival* and *The Jewels of the Quran*.<sup>641</sup> They ought to be learned before other studies.

The second state is that one does not possess the ability to do this, but can engage in remembrance and worship. This is the degree of the worshippers. It is a great degree, especially if one can occupy oneself with remembrance of God so that it dominates the soul and is its master and attendant.

The third state is that one engage in something in which there is some comfort for the people, such as serving the Sufis, religious scholars, and the poor. This is superior to the voluntary acts of the acts of worship, for it is both an act of worship and a comfort for the Muslims. It also assists them in their worship, and the blessings of their supplications have an enormous effect.

The fourth state is that one is unable to do this also, and must engage in trade for himself and his family. If he conducts (his business) honestly and people are safe from his tongue and hands, if greed for the world does not compel him to seeking excess, and if he is satisfied with what is necessary; he too is counted among the worshippers and is in the second rank of the Companions of the Right Hand, even though he may not be among the foremost or the intimates. Attending the degree of integrity is the least of the degrees.

<sup>640</sup> These mid-morning prayers are not obligatory.

<sup>641</sup> *The Jewels of the Quran* (*Jawāhir al-Qurān*). No. 37 in HK's list of the works of Ghazzali, falling between the writing of *The Revival* and *The Alchemy of Happiness*.

However, if one does not employ oneself in any of these four states, he will be counted among the destroyed and the companions and followers of Satan.

THE FOURTH PERIOD is from the decline of the sun (from its zenith) to the time of the afternoon obligatory formal prayer. One should take a nap before (the end of) this period, for a nap is to the formal prayers of night as the pre-dawn meal is to fasting. However, if there is to be no rising for the night prayers, that napping is disapproved, for too much sleep is reprehensible. After waking (from the nap), one should purify oneself before the afternoon obligatory formal prayer. One should make the effort to hear the call to prayer in the mosque and perform the (traditional) "greeting to the mosque" formal prayer and make the replies to the phrases of the mu'adhdhin's call. One should perform four bows of formal prayer before the obligatory formal prayer, for the Messenger (S) used to prolong these four bows and say: "At this time the gates of heaven are open." It is related in the Traditions that: "Seventy thousand angels will pray with whoever performs these four bows of formal prayer and seek forgiveness for him until evening." Then one performs the obligatory formal prayer with the imam and then a two-bow prayer in accordance with the practice of the Messenger (S). Until the time of the afternoon prayer, one should not engage in anything except acquiring knowledge, helping Muslims, remembering God, reading the Quran, or lawful enterprise, according to need.

THE FIFTH PERIOD is from the time of the afternoon obligatory formal prayer until the setting of the sun. One should repair to the mosque before the afternoon prayer and perform four bows of prayer, for the Messenger (S) said: "Let God Most High have mercy on the person who performs a four-bow formal prayer before the obligatory formal afternoon prayer." When finished with that, one should occupy oneself with nothing other than that which we have said.

Then one should go to the mosque before the sunset prayer and occupy oneself in glorification and asking forgiveness, for the grace of this time is the same as that of the pre-dawn. As He said: *So glorify thy Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting.* (Q. 50:39) At this time one should recite *By the sun and its brightness...* (Q. 91), *By the night when it covers...* (Q. 92), *I seek refuge (in the Lord of Daybreak)...* (Q. 113), and *I seek refuge (in the Lord of mankind)...* (Q. 114)

When sun sets, one should ask forgiveness. In short, the daytime should be divided up and for each period one should do a different thing, as is advisable for that purpose, for the blessings of life appear from this. As for the person who has frittered away his time so as to see what will happen each moment, his life is wasted.

### THE DIVISIONS OF THE NIGHT ARE THREE:

THE FIRST PERIOD is from the sunset obligatory formal prayer until the obligatory formal prayer before sleep. Staying awake during the time between these two obligatory prayers has great merit. In the Traditions, it is related that this revelation: *They forsake (their) beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and in hope,* (Q: 32:17) was about this. One must occupy oneself in formal prayer until the evening obligatory formal prayer is performed. The saints considered this superior to fasting during the day and then busying oneself with eating at this time. After completing the *witr*<sup>642</sup> formal prayer, one should not indulge in idle talk and play, for this is the conclusion of activity and the last of the acts (for the day) should not be other than good.

THE SECOND PERIOD is sleep. Even though sleep is not worship, still, if it is adorned with the etiquette and the Practices of the Prophet, it resembles worship. It is a Practice of the Prophet (S) to sleep facing the direction of prayer and to first sleep on the right hand, as a corpse is laid in the grave; for sleep is the brother of death and waking up is like the Resurrection. It may happen that the soul will be seized during sleep and not returned. One must be prepared for the affairs of the Hereafter. One should go to sleep in a purified state and repent and resolve that one will not sin again if one should awaken (the next morning). One should keep a written will under one's pillow. One should not put oneself in bed with undue ceremony. One should not spread soft bedclothes until sleep overcomes, for sleep wastes the life span. One should not sleep more than eight hours a day, as this is one third of the twenty-four hours. If we calculate that a life has sixty years, then twenty years will be wasted in sleep.<sup>643</sup> It is not right to waste more than this.

One must place water and a toothbrush nearby with one's own hands for (use) when one rises during the night or early morning for formal prayer. One should intend to rise during the night or pre-dawn, as this intention (itself) has a reward, even if sleep wins its victory.

When placing one's side on the floor, one should say: "My Lord, I have lain down in Thy name and shall arise in Thy name." One should recite the supplications we have already mentioned. One should recite the *Verse of the Throne*, (Q. 2:255) *The Messenger believes...* (Q. 2:285),<sup>644</sup> the two chapters of *Refuge*, (Q. 113 & 114), and *Surah*

<sup>642</sup> *witr*: "odd-numbered." that is, a prayer with an odd number of bows. See discussion in the Prolegomena. This particular prayer, performed after the evening (*'ishā'*) prayer, traditionally consists of three bows.

<sup>643</sup> Alas. Ghazzali did not live to see sixty. He died when he was in his early fifties, may God be pleased with him and have mercy upon his soul.

<sup>644</sup> That is, the verse which begins with those words: Q. 2:285.

*Blessedness*<sup>645</sup> (Q. 67), so that one falls asleep between remembrance and purification. The soul of anyone who does this is carried to the Throne and spiritual rewards are written for him until he awakens.

THE THIRD PERIOD is the night vigil.<sup>646</sup> It is the night formal prayer performed after waking up during the middle of the night. Two bows of formal prayer during the second half of the night are more meritorious than a multitude of formal prayers at other times. This is because at that time, the soul is purer, there is no distraction from the world, and the gates of mercy in heaven are open wide.

There are many Traditions attesting the virtue of standing at night and we have cited them in *The Revival*. In short, one must spend the periods of the night and day, each one, in some activity and not cease (doing so). If one does this for one night and day, every day one will wish to do it again until the end of one's life. If this is difficult for someone, he should not over-extend his expectations; he should say to himself: "I shall do this today for perhaps I shall die tonight. I shall do it tonight, for perhaps I will be dead tomorrow," and so on like that every day.

If one becomes distressed by persevering in this, one should know that one is on a journey and one's homeland (to which is returning) is the abode of the Hereafter. On a journey, there is the sorrow of being of a stranger, but the consolation is that it will soon be over and one will rest in one's homeland. It is obvious just how long (this) life is in comparison with the eternal life that will be in the Hereafter. It is not a cause of wonder if someone endures a year's sorrows for the comfort of ten; why should it be strange, then, if one endures the sorrows of a hundred years for the comfort of ten thousand? Rather, for everlasting comfort?

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<sup>645</sup> "Blessedness" (*Tabāruk*): this chapter is more commonly referred to as *al-Mulk* (the Kingdom).

<sup>646</sup> "night vigil": *tahajjud*.



# **THE ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS**

**BY IMAM GHAZZALI**

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*

## **THE SECOND PILLAR: CONCERNING MUTUAL RELATIONS**

In this Pillar, there are also ten chapters:

THE FIRST CHAPTER: The Etiquette of Eating

THE SECOND CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct in Marrying

THE THIRD CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct for Earning  
and Trade

THE FOURTH CHAPTER: Seeking the Lawful

THE FIFTH CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct of Association  
With People

THE SIXTH CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct of  
Secluding Oneself

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct on a Journey

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER: The Rules of Conduct of *Sama'*

THE NINTH CHAPTER: Enjoining the Good and Forbidding  
the Bad

THE TENTH CHAPTER: (The Art of) Governance

## CHAPTER ONE: CONCERNING THE ETIQUETTE OF EATING

Know that the way of worship consists of both the acts of worship, and the provision for the way is also part of the way. Therefore, everything that is necessary for religion is also a part of religion. Eating food is necessary for the way of religion, for the aim of all travelers is seeing God Most High and the seed of that is knowledge and action, but perseverance in study and activity is not possible without a sound body, and the soundness of the body is not possible without food and drink. Consequently, the consumption of victuals is a necessity on the way of religion; ergo, a part of it. About this God Most High said: *Eat of the good things and do good.* (Q. 23:51) He combined eating food and doing good together.

So, the consumption of victuals by whoever does so in order to have the strength for knowledge and deed and for the endurance to tread the path to the Hereafter is an act of worship. As the Messenger (S) said: "There is a reward for everything for the Muslim, even the morsel he puts in his own or the mouths of his own family." He said that because the purpose of the Muslim in all of this is (traveling) the road of the Hereafter.

The signs that eating food is a part of the way of religion are that one not eat greedily, that one eat of that which is lawful, and that one eat according to one's need, while observing the rules and etiquette of eating. Know that there are Practices of the Prophet with respect to eating: some before eating, some after (eating), and some while eating.

### THE ETIQUETTE BEFORE EATING

Those which precede eating are:

*FIRST:* One should wash one's hands and (rinse one's) mouth. Because the eating of food is with the intention (that it be) provision for the Hereafter, it is an act of worship. (The washing) is like the lesser ablution before the call to formal prayer, and the hands and mouth also become cleaner. It is related in the Traditions that the person who washes his hands before eating "will be secure from poverty."

*SECOND:* The food should be placed on a dining cloth,<sup>647</sup> not on a table.<sup>648</sup> That is what the Messenger (S) did, because the dining cloth

<sup>647</sup> A "dining cloth" (*sufrah*) is spread on the floor or ground and the diners sit around it partaking of the food placed upon it.

<sup>648</sup> "table" (*khwān*): Steingass defines a *khwān* as: "a table, a covered table, and the meat upon it; a spacious tray." In a note, HK says that it is a tray—and a well-tooled tray can certainly be more ostentatious than a plain piece of cloth—but that does not entirely serve

reminds one of a journey,<sup>649</sup> and a journey in this world reminds one of the journey in the Hereafter and it is all closer to humility. Eating from a table is lawful, as no prohibition for doing so has come down to us. However, the custom of the forefathers was to use the dining cloth, and the Messenger (S) ate from a dining cloth.

*THIRD:* One should sit properly, with the right knee up and sitting upon the left leg, and not leaning against anything. The Messenger (S) said: "I do not eat food leaning back against something, for I am a servant. I sit as a servant does and I eat as a servant does."

*FOURTH:* One should form the intention that the eating is for strength in worship, not (to satisfy) one's carnal appetite. Ibrahim Shayban<sup>650</sup> says: "I have not eaten anything for my carnal appetite for eighty years." The sign of the correctness of this intention is that one aim to eat little, for excess in eating restrains one from worship. The Messenger (S) declares: "The few morsels that keep a person erect are sufficient." If one is not content with this, one third of the stomach is for food, one third for drink, and one third for breath.

*FIFTH:* One should not partake of food unless one is hungry. The best of the Practices of the Prophet that should be presented to food is hunger. Before hunger, eating is blameworthy and censurable. Whoever sits down to eat hungry and gets up still hungry will never have need of a physician.

*SIXTH:* One should be satisfied with what is available and not importune for tasty dishes; for the purpose of the believer is the maintenance of strength for worship, not enjoyment. It is the Practice of the Prophet to hold bread in honor, for it is the support of a person. The greatest respect for it is that one not delay in eating it. Indeed, not even while waiting for obligatory formal prayer, for when the bread is ready, one should eat it first and afterwards perform the obligatory formal prayer.

*SEVENTH:* One should not begin to eat until the person with whom one is to eat is present, for eating alone is not good. The more

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to make the distinction because a tray may also be placed upon the ground. Ghazzali's point is about simplicity and humility, and eating on the floor—as is still the custom throughout most of the Islamic world—would appear to require the sharper contrast with eating at a table (in the Western fashion), rather than eating from a tray.

<sup>649</sup> "dining cloth (*sufrah*)... journey (*safar*)": a play on words in Persian and Arabic. *Sufrah* (*s-f-r*) resembles *safar* (*s-f-r-h*), the difference in Perso-Arabic spelling being only the additional *h* of the feminine Arabic ending to the former.

<sup>650</sup> Ibrahim Shayban: Probably the same as Ibrahim Shaybani mentioned in *Kashf al-Mahjub*. He was a disciple of Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad (or Ahmad) bin Isma'il al-Maghribi. The same source quotes an Ibrahim bin Shayban's opinion about annihilation (*fanā*) in a section on the followers of Abu Sa'id Kharraz.

hands on the food,<sup>651</sup> the greater the blessing. Anas<sup>652</sup> (R) says: "The Messenger (S) never ate alone."

### THE ETIQUETTE AT THE TIME OF EATING

As for the rules of etiquette at the time of eating, they are to first say: "*In the name of God*," and to finish with: "*Praise be to God*." It is better that one say "*in the name of God*" with the first morsel, "*in the name of God the Merciful*" with the second, and "*in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*" with the third in an audible voice so that others may be reminded.

One should eat with the right hand, and start with salt and finish with salt: for it is related in the Traditions that by means of this (act) at the outset one may defeat greed by picking up a morsel contrary to the appetite.<sup>653</sup> One should make each bite small and chew it well, and not extend one's hand for another morsel before swallowing the first.

One should not criticize any food, for the Messenger (S) never did that. If it is good, one eats it; if it is not, one may withhold his hand. One should eat from that which is in front of him, except fruit, which may be taken from all sides of the tray, as it is of various kinds. One should not eat from the middle of a bowl of bread crumbled in broth; rather one should eat from the sides. One should not eat from the middle of the bread;<sup>654</sup> rather, one should take it from the sides, going around it. One should not cut bread with a knife; the same is true of meat.<sup>655</sup> One should not place a bowl or something inedible on the bread. One should not wipe one's hands clean with bread. Should some morsel or food fall out from the hand, one should pick it up, clean it, and eat it, for it is related in the Traditions that if it is left (uneaten), it will have been left for Satan.

One should first lick the fingers in the mouth (after eating), then wipe them with a cloth napkin<sup>656</sup> until the signs of the food that has been

<sup>651</sup> The Prophet and the Companions of course ate by hand, as is still common in many regions where the older traditions of Islam are maintained.

<sup>652</sup> Anas Malik: See Note 358.

<sup>653</sup> That is, by taking a pinch of salt first instead of some food the appetite craves, one shows one's mastery of it.

<sup>654</sup> Bread was (and still is) baked in large, relatively flat, round or oval loafs varying in thickness from an eighth of an inch to an inch or so. It is usually unleavened, or only slightly so. The edges tend to have a slight crust, while the center is somewhat softer. Ghazzali says that one should eat from the edges of the loaf and not tear out pieces from the (softer) center.

<sup>655</sup> It should be remarked that meat is normally thoroughly cooked "well done" in Middle Eastern cooking. It is usually not served rare, or even medium. When eating by hand, it is easily bitten or pulled apart and usually does not require the use of a knife.

<sup>656</sup> "a cloth napkin" (*izār*): a piece of cloth of the material used to make loin wrappers (also *izār*) and underclothes that is used as a napkin. It is not normally fine linen.

eaten are gone (from the fingers). It may be that the blessing of (the food) will remain.

When eating dates, apricots, or anything which can be counted, one should eat an odd number—seven, eleven, or twenty-one—so that all of its effects may be related to God Most High Who is One (an odd number) and for Whom there is no mate. Every act in which there is no remembrance of God Most High of one kind or another coupled with it is futile and wasted. Therefore, odd is better than even for the reason that it is related to Him.

One should not put date-stones and dates on the same platter, nor take them together in the hand; the same for anything which has refuse and something which is discarded. One should not drink much water while eating.

### THE ETIQUETTE OF DRINKING WATER

As for the rules of etiquette for the drinking of water, they are that one hold the water jug in one's right and say: "*In the name of God.*" One should drink in one continual, thin draught. One should not drink standing, nor lying down. One should first look into the water jug (to be sure) that there is no straw or living creature inside it. If a belch comes out of the throat, one should remove one's mouth from the jug. If one wishes to take more than a single draught, one should make it three times, uttering "*In the name of God*" each time, and at the end, one should say: "*Praise be to God.*" One should watch the bottom of the jug lest water fall on some place. After one has finished drinking, one should say: "*Praise be to God Who made this sweet and pleasant and not made it saline and bitter with our sins.*"

### THE ETIQUETTE AFTER EATING

As for the rules of etiquette after eating, they are that one withhold one's hand before repletion and that one clean the fingers in the mouth, then by using a napkin. One should pick up bread crumbs, for it is related in the Traditions that the livelihood of whoever does thus is broadened, his children will be healthy and without defect, and (those crumbs) will become the dower of the bright-eyed ones.<sup>657</sup>

Then one should pick the teeth. Whatever is removed from the teeth by the tongue should be swallowed; whatever is removed by means of a toothpick should be thrown away. The bowl should be cleaned with the fingers. It is related in the Traditions that the bowl says about

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<sup>657</sup> "the bright-eyed ones" (*hūr al-‘ayn*): See Note 224.

whoever licks<sup>658</sup> the bowl clean: “O Lord, free him from the fire as he has freed me from the grasp of demons.” If one rinses it with water, one should drink the water: it is as though one had freed a slave.

After eating, one should say: “*Praise be to God Who has fed us and given us to drink and has sufficed for us and has sheltered us; He is our Lord and our Master.*” Then, one should recite the 112th (The Unity) and the 106th (*The Quraysh*) chapters of the Quran.

If the food was lawful, one should give thanks; if there is doubt about its lawfulness, one should weep and be sorrowful. A person who eats it but does not weep is like the person who eats and laughs forgetfully. When washing the hands, one puts (dry) soda<sup>659</sup> in the left hand and washes the fingertips of the right hand first, without (using) the soda. Then, one puts the (moistened) fingers (of the right hand) in the soda and spreads it on the lips and palate and rubs them well. Then, one washes the fingers and then, one washes the mouth.

#### THE ETIQUETTE WHEN EATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

The rules that we have already mentioned should be observed whether eating alone or eating with other. However, when eating with others, there are an additional seven rules:

*FIRST:* One should not extend one’s hand (to eat) until the person who is senior to him—in age, in knowledge, in piety, or for some other reason—extends his hand.

*SECOND:* One should not be silent while eating, as is the custom of the non-Arabs. Rather, one speaks of pleasant things from the stories of the saints and of wisdom. One should not utter foolishness.

*THIRD:* One should observe the eating of his neighbor from the same bowl and under no circumstances eat more than he. That is unlawful because the food is shared. Instead, one should be generous and place the choicest morsels before him. If the companion eats slowly, one should request him to eat with more liveliness, but one should not say “Eat up!” to him more than three times, for more than that is excessive and intemperance in importuning. One should not swear oaths, because food is more humble than that it should be the cause of swearing oaths.

*FOURTH:* One should not impose an obligation upon the companion by saying “Eat up!” to him, but one continues to be agreeable however he eats. One must not reduce one’s usual (quantity) when eating (with others), for that is hypocrisy; but one should observe the rules of etiquette when one eats alone, just as when one can eat in the presence of others. However, if one eats less out of a desire to give more to another,

<sup>658</sup> “licks”: this probably refers to licking the fingers one uses to clean the bowl.

<sup>659</sup> Soda (*ushnān*): The herb alkali and the ashes made from it that are used for washing clothes and the hands after eating. (Steingass)

that is good. If one eats more (than usual) to enliven the others, that too is good.

Ibn al-Mubarak<sup>660</sup> (R) used to invite the poor to eat dates. He would say: "To whoever eats the most I shall give a *diram* for each date-stone." Then he would count the date-stones to see who had eaten the most and give (him) a *diram* for each one.

**FIFTH:** One should look in front of oneself and not at the food of others; nor should one stop eating before the others, as they will honor him.<sup>661</sup> If one is in the habit of eating little, at the beginning one should play with one's food and then begin to eat enthusiastically towards the end. If one cannot (do this), one should make one's excuses so that others may not be reluctant (to eat) in front of him.

**SIXTH:** One should not do anything with is naturally disliked or hated by others. One should not shake off (food) from one's hands into the bow. One should not bring the mouth down to the bowl in a way that something might fall out of the mouth into it. When expelling something from the mouth, one should turn away. One should not dip an oily bit of food in vinegar. One should not return a piece of food which has been torn apart with the teeth to the bowl—for this will naturally be repugnant to all, and one should not talk about disgusting things.

**SEVENTH:** After washing one's hands in the basin, one should not spit into it in front of people. A person to whom one defers should be given precedence, but if he yields (this honor), one should accept it. One should pass (the basin) from the right side. Water should be handed from hand to hand for all, and not poured separately as is the custom of the non-Arabs. If the hands are washed at one time by all, the first is nearest to humility. When spitting out water from the mouth, one should do so gently so as not to splash it on anyone and spatter the carpet. It is preferred that the person pouring the water on the hands be standing rather than sitting.

All of these rules of etiquette have been reported in the Traditions and the non-Prophetic traditions. The difference between a human being and a beast becomes evident in these rules. A beast eats as required by its nature and does not know the seemly from the unseemly, for it has not been given the power of discrimination as humans have. Since this has been given to the human being, should one not use it, one does not do justice to the blessing of intelligence and discrimination and one has shown ingratitude for that blessing.

<sup>660</sup> Ibn al-Mubarak: 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubārak, Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān. Born AH118/736CE, he was a famous jurisprudent and a poet of note. He knew Ibrahim Adham, see Note 683. He died at Hit in western Iraq AH181/797-8CE.

<sup>661</sup> That is, they will stop eating out of respect for him.

### THE MERIT OF EATING WITH FRIENDS AND BROTHERS IN RELIGION

Know that hosting friends to a meal is more meritorious than giving plentiful alms. It is related in the Traditions that three things are not counted against the servant (of God): that which one eats at the pre-dawn meal (when fasting); that which one eats when breaking the fast; and that which one eats with friends.

Ja'far bin Muhammad<sup>662</sup> (R) says: "When thou sittest with thy brothers at the dining cloth, in order to lengthen the time, do not hasten, for that amount will not be counted in the life span."<sup>663</sup>

Hasan Basri says: "Whatever a servant of God spends for the sustenance of himself, his mother, and his father must be accounted for, except that which is brought before friends."

Some of the great ones<sup>664</sup> were accustomed to placing a great amount of food on the dining cloth when giving a dinner for the brothers. They would say: "It is related in the Traditions that there is no accountability for him who eats what is left over from the (meal of the) friends. I always want to eat of that after that which I have eaten with you."

The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, may God honor him, says: "I prefer placing a *sa'*<sup>665</sup> of food before the brothers over freeing a slave."

In the Traditions, it is related that God Most High will say at the Resurrection: "O son of Adam! I was hungry and thou didst not feed me." They will say: "O Lord of Glory! How couldst Thou have become hungry when Thou art the Lord of all the universe?" He will say: "Thy brother was hungry; if thou hadst given him food, thou wouldest have given food to Me."

And the Messenger (S) said: "Whoever feeds and gives drink to a brother Muslim so as to sate him, God Most High distances him from the fire of Hell (the distance of) seven trenches, the distance between each two trenches being five hundred years (of travel)." And he said: "The best of you is he who gives food."

<sup>662</sup> Ja'far bin Muhammad: Abu 'Abdullah Ja'far bin Muhammad bin 'Ali bin al-Husayn bin 'Ali Abi Talib, was given the epithet *al-Sādiq* (the Truthful). He was a learned and pious man, and the Ja'fari school of Religious Law is named after him. Among the Twelver Shias, he is regarded as the sixth Imam. He died at the age of 68 AH148/765CE and is buried at Madinah.

<sup>663</sup> That is, the time thus spent will be added to the life span.

<sup>664</sup> "great ones" (*buzurgān*): or "saints."

<sup>665</sup> *sā'*: A quantity equal to four *mudd*, or about five and one-third pints in volume, or to about five and one-third pounds in weight. (Steingass)

**THE ETIQUETTE OF EATING FOR FRIENDS WHO VISIT ONE OTHER**

Know that in this there are four rules:

*THE FIRST (RULE)* is that one should not aim to visit someone at the time of a meal, for it is related in the Traditions: "Whoever goes to eat someone's food uninvited, is a scoundrel and, in eating, he is a consumer of the unlawful." Moreover, if one accidentally comes at a mealtime, he should not eat without being invited. If he is invited to eat, and he knows that this invitation is not from the heart, he should not eat; for that is not appropriate. He should make excuses and refuse graciously. However, if he heads for the house of a friend in whom he has confidence and is privy to his heart, it is lawful. Indeed, this is the custom among friends.

The Messenger (S) and Abu Bakr (R) and 'Umar (R) went to the houses of Abu Ayyub Ansari<sup>666</sup> and Abu al-Haytham<sup>667</sup> and asked for food. This was as a favor to the host in this good deed, for they knew that each was desirous of this.

There was one of the saints who had three hundred and sixty friends. He was at the house of one of them every night. There was also one who had thirty friends. He was at the house of each one of them once a month. There was one who had seven friends. He was at the house of each one of them once a week. These friends were the capital (of the saints) instead of trade and property, and (the friends) were the enablers of the leisure and worship of (the saints). Indeed, when friendship with a co-religionist occurs, it is lawful that, if he is not at home, to eat of his food in his absence, for when the Messenger (S) went to the home of Burayrah,<sup>668</sup> he ate of his food in her absence, as the Messenger (S) knew that she would be pleased by this. Muhammad bin Wasi<sup>669</sup> (R) was one of the saints of humility. Together with his companions, he used to go the house of Hasan of Basrah (R) and they would eat of what they found (in Hasan's absence). When (Hasan) came back, he would be delighted with that. A group did the same in the house of Sufyan Thawri. When he

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<sup>666</sup> Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī: Khālid bin Zayd al-Khazraji. One of the Helpers, the Madinans who gave refuge to the Muslims fleeing from Makkah at the beginning of the Islamic era. The Prophet alighted at his home when he arrived at Madinah during the Emigration from Makkah. He participated in most of the military expeditions and died bravely at the walls of Constantinople (İstanbul), AH52/672CE. His tomb in a suburb of Istanbul is a place of pilgrimage and the special object of veneration in Turkey.

<sup>667</sup> Abū al-Haytham: Abū al-Haytham bin al-Tayyihān. He was one of the twelve men who swore fealty to the Prophet at the First Pledge of 'Aqabah and was present at the Second Pledge.

<sup>668</sup> Burayrah: A maid bought by 'Ayishah and manumitted by her.

<sup>669</sup> Muhammad bin Wāsi<sup>c</sup>: A soldier who became an ascetic and a mystic. He lived in 'Iraq and died there AH120/738CE.

entered, he said: "This reminds me of the character of the forefathers, for they did thus."

**THE SECOND RULE** is that one should offer what is available when a friend comes to visit and not stand on ceremony. If one has nothing, one should not borrow. If one only has enough for the needs of his family, one should leave it for them. Someone invited 'Ali bin Abi Talib, may God honor him, (for a meal). He said: "I shall come under three conditions: that thou buyest nothing from the market, that thou providest whatever is in the house, and that thou givest thy family their portion in full."

Fudayl 'Iyad<sup>670</sup> says: "People have cut off from each other because of ceremony."<sup>671</sup> If that could be eliminated between them, they would be able to visit each other without formality and elaborate preparation." A friend of one of the saints set forth an elaborate meal. The saint said: "When thou art alone, thou dost not eat like this; and when I am alone, I do not eat like this. When we are together, why all this display? Remove it from in front of us or I shall come no more."

Salman Farsi<sup>672</sup> (R) says: "The Messenger (S) commanded us to avoid ceremonious display and not to turn away from what is at hand." The Companions used to bring pieces of bread and dried dates to each other and say: "We do not know which is a greater offense: to consider abject that which is available and not offer it, or to consider it abject when offered to one." The prophet Jonah (A) placed some pieces of bread and some leeks which he had cultivated before his friends, saying: "If it were not for the fact that God Most High had cursed the ceremonious, I would have been more formal."

Some people had an argument. They sought Zechariah (A) to settle it among them. They went to his house, but did not find him there. They saw a beautiful woman and were astonished! What was a prophet doing luxuriating with such a woman? When they looked for him—he

<sup>670</sup> Fudayl 'Iyad: Fudayl bin 'Iyād, Abū 'Alī. He was born at Marw (modern Mary in Turkmenistan) and started his life as a highwayman in Khorasan. He underwent conversion and traveled to Kufah (in Iraq) to study and became a noted mystic, dying at Makkah AH817/803CE.

<sup>671</sup> "ceremony" (*takalluf*): The expense and trouble of the ceremonious entertainment of others.

<sup>672</sup> Salman the Persian: Salmān Fārsi. The first Persian to embrace Islam (his Persian name was Firuzan), one of the Companions. It is said that he was kidnapped by bedouin tribesmen on the way to Syria and sold as a slave to a Jew, after which he went to Madinah. He became a "client" (*mawlā*) of the Prophet who declared that Salman was "of his family." He suggested the digging of the trench around the city of Madinah thereby confounding the attacking Quraysh at the battle of the Trench (AH5/627CE). He died in AH35/655CE and is buried in Mada'in, a suburb of modern Baghdad. His tomb is still a famous place of pilgrimage.

was working some place as a hired laborer—they found him eating. They talked to him, but he did not say: "Eat bread with me." When he finished and rose, he came out of that field barefooted. They were much perplexed by these three acts. They asked: "What is this?" He said: "I have that beautiful woman so that I may preserve my faith and not lay my eyes and soul elsewhere. I did not invite you to eat because that food was my pay so that I could work. If I had eaten less, I would be deficient in my labors for them, and that is an obligation I have accepted. And I came out barefooted because there is enmity between the owners of these fields. I did not want to carry the earth of one field to another on my shoes." From this, it is apparent that truthfulness and honesty in deeds take precedence over ostentation.

*THE THIRD RULE* is that one should not domineer over the host if one knows that this will be hard for him. If one chooses between two things, one should choose the easier, for the Messenger (S) did thus in all affairs. A person went to Salman and presented some barley bread and salt to him, saying: "If there were sweet fennel, it would be good." Salman did not have anything, so he pawned a spouted pot for ablutions (to obtain some sweet fennel). When the man ate, he said: "*Praise be to God Who satisfies us with what He provides us.*" Salman said: "If thou hadst been content, my pot would not have been pawned for sweet fennel!"

However, in a place where one knows that it will not be any trouble and the person would be pleased, it is permissible to request things from him. Shafi'i (R) was staying in the house of a saffron trader in Baghdad. Every day the trader would first give a menu of different kinds of food to the cook. One day Shafi'i added in his own hand an item to the menu. When the saffron trader saw his guest's writing in the hand of a bondmaid, he was delighted and so grateful that he freed the girl.

*THE FOURTH RULE* is that the master of the house should ask his guests what they would like if, in his heart, he is agreeable to accept their commands, for there is more spiritual reward in (satisfying) their desires. The Messenger (S) says: "For whoever rises to satisfy the desires of a brother Muslim, a thousand good deeds are recorded and a thousand thousand<sup>673</sup> sins are erased from his record and he will be carried up a thousand thousand degrees and have a portion of three heavens: Paradise, Eden, and Eternity. However, asking whether one should bring something or not is disliked and blameworthy. Rather, one should bring what one has. If it is not eaten, it should be taken back.

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<sup>673</sup> "thousand thousand": a million.

### THE VIRTUE OF BEING A HOST

Know that what has been said above is about a person who goes somewhere uninvited. However, the rule for inviting guests is different. It has been said that when a guest arrives thou shouldest not stand on ceremony with him. If thou invite someone, do not hold back; that is, do whatever thou canst for him.

Many Traditions have come down to us about the virtue of having guests. It is the custom of the Arabs, when they are traveling and come upon each other's encampments, to alight. Doing justice to such a guest is important. About this, the Messenger (S) said: "There is no good in a person who is not a host." And he said: "Do not stand on ceremony with a guest, for then ye take him as an enemy. Whoever takes a guest as an enemy, is an enemy of God. And God has enmity for whoever has enmity for (Him)."

Borrowing for the guest who is a stranger and being formal with him is lawful; however, not for friends who go to visit each other (regularly), for that is a cause of breaking off (friendships). Abu Rafi<sup>674</sup>, the client<sup>675</sup> of the Messenger (S), says: "The Messenger (S) said to him: 'Tell such-and-such a Jew to lend us some flour until the month of Rajab, for a guest has arrived.' The Jew said: 'I shall not give it without a pledge.' I came and told (the Prophet). He said: 'By God, I am trusted in Heaven and I am trusted on earth! If he lends it, I shall return it. Now, take my armor and use that as a pledge.' I took it gave it as a pledge (for the flour)."

Abraham (A) would go out a mile or two looking for guests. He would not eat until he had found a guest. Because of his earnestness in this, that custom of hospitality endures at his tomb<sup>676</sup> and until this age. It is never empty of guests every night. Sometimes, there are one hundred and twenty guests there. Villages have been given to (the shrine) as an endowment.

<sup>674</sup> Abū Rāfi': other than that he was a client of the Messenger, no other information is available at present.

<sup>675</sup> "client" (*mawla*): A client was a person under the protection of another, a practice resembling the ancient Roman institution of clientage. The client was originally a term for a slave, but also came to mean the status of a freed slave. Later it was applied to non-Arabs protected by Arabs in the Umayyad empire. Confusion is caused by this term because *mawla* can also mean "protector" or "helper," and is so used in the Quran.

<sup>676</sup> At Hebron in Palestine.

**THE ETIQUETTE OF GIVING AND ACCEPTING INVITATIONS**

The traditional practice of a person who is inviting others is that he not invite other than the righteous because feeding is the giving of strength. To give a libertine food is to aid him in his corruption. One should invite the poor, not the rich, for the Messenger (S) says: "The worst food is the food of a feast to which the rich are invited and of which the poor are deprived." One must not forget one's relatives and close friends, for if one forgets them, it will cause their shying away. One should not issue invitations for the purpose of self-glorification and boasting. Rather, the thought should be to observe a Practice of the Prophet and to give comfort to the poor. One should not invite anyone for whom accepting the invitation would cause difficulties; that might cause sorrow. One should not invite anyone whom one would not like to accept (the invitation), for if he should accept, his food will be eaten with disgust, and this may cause a transgression.

As for the rules of acceptance, they are:

(*THE FIRST RULE*) is that one should make no distinction between the poor and the rich. One should not consider oneself above accepting the invitation of the poor, for the Messenger (S) used to accept the invitation of the destitute. One day Hasan bin 'Ali<sup>677</sup> (R) passed by a group of poor people. They had some pieces of bread and were eating them. They said: "O (grand)son of the Prophet of God, join us." He alighted from his horse and joined them, saying: "God Most High does not like the haughty." After eating, he said: "Now you must accept my invitation for tomorrow." The next day he prepared fine dishes and sat with them eating.

*THE SECOND RULE* is that if one knows that the host will put him under some obligation and consider the repast a show of superiority, one should make some excuse to him and not accept. Indeed, one's acceptance will be taken as an acknowledgment of (the host's) superiority and (put one under an) obligation. In the same way, if one knows that there is some doubt (about the lawfulness) of the host's property, or there is something prohibited at that place such as a silken carpet of a silver censer, or there are pictures of living creatures on the walls or ceiling, or there will be listening to songs and flutes, or someone will be playing the buffoon, or use foul language, or young girls will

<sup>677</sup> Hasan bin 'Ali: Al-Hasan bin 'Ali bin Abi Tālib. The first son of 'Ali and Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, he was born c. AH3 or 4/624-6CE and was a favorite of his grandfather. He is the second of the Twelver Shiah Imams and died AH49/665-6CE at the age of 45 or 46 at Madinah.

come under control of the men, one should not accept, for all of these are reprehensible. One should not be present at such a place.

In the same way, if the host is a heretic, a libertine, or an oppressor, or his intention is boasting and presumption, one must not accept. If one does and one sees one of the prohibited things there and cannot prohibit it, then one should leave.

*THE THIRD RULE* is that one should not be prevented by the distance of the road. Rather, whatever one can usually endure, one should endure (to attend). In the Torah, it is written: "Go a mile to visit the sick; accompany the bier for two miles; and go three miles to accept an invitation; and four miles to visit a co-religionist brother."

*THE FOURTH RULE* is that one should not be prevented by fasting. One should attend, if the host will not be upset, and content oneself with the pleasant odor (of the food) and good conversation, for this is the entertainment of the fasters. If one will be upset, then one should break his fast, for the wages of the delight of the soul of a Muslim are superior to much fasting.<sup>678</sup> The Messenger (S) reproached the person who did so, saying: "Thy brother has taken much trouble for thee and thou sayest 'I am fasting'?"

*THE FIFTH RULE* is that one should not accept an invitation with the intention of relieving the appetite of the belly, for that is the work of beasts. Instead, one should make the intention of the emulation of the Practice of the Messenger (S) and one should make the intention of caution, for the Messenger (S) has said: "Whoever does not accept an invitation is in rebellion against God and His Prophet." This is why some have said: "Accepting an invitation is a religious obligation." One should also make the intention to honor one's brother Muslim, for it is related in the Traditions: 'Whoever honors a believer has honored God Most High.' One should also make the intention to give pleasure to his soul, for it is related in the Traditions: "Whoever gives delight to a believer has given delight to God Most High." One should also make the intention to visit the host, for visiting the believers is one of the great offerings." And, one should make the intention to protect oneself from backbiting, so that it not be said he did not come out of spite and arrogance.

These are the six intentions,<sup>679</sup> each of which has a reward. The permissible actions of such intentions become among the offerings (to

<sup>678</sup> The fasting that Ghazzali is referring to here is voluntary fasting, not the obligatory fasting of Ramadan.

<sup>679</sup> In a note, HK suggests that the first part of the fifth rule, the prohibition against satisfying the appetite of the belly, is apparently counted separately as one of the six.

God). The great ones of faith endeavored to have an intention in each of their acts and rests related to religion, so that they wasted nothing of their breaths.<sup>680</sup>

### THE ETIQUETTE OF ARRIVAL

As for the rules of etiquette concerning arrival, one should not keep others waiting, nor should one be in a hurry. One should take one's seat in a humble place and sit where the host indicates. If other guests give up the seat of honor to one, one should behave humbly. One should not sit facing the women's room. One should not look frequently at the place from which the food will be brought. As one sits down, one should greet the persons near one and enquire after their health.

If one sees something forbidden, one should object; if one is unable to change it, one should leave. Ahmad Hanbal has said: "If one spies a silver collyrium box, one should not remain." If one wishes to stay the night, it is the rule for the host to show one the toilet and the direction of formal prayer.

### AS FOR THE ETIQUETTE OF PLACING THE FOOD—

*THE FIRST RULE* is that one should be quick. One of the ways of honoring a guest is not to keep him waiting. When a group is present (for the meal), but someone has not yet arrived, those present take precedence unless the absent one is a poor person who will be broken-hearted. In such a situation, delay with that intention is better.

Hatim Asamm<sup>681</sup> says: "Haste is from Satan except in five things: food for the guest, preparing the dead, the marriage of girls, repaying debts, and repentance for sins." Haste in a banquet is a Practice of the Prophet.

*THE SECOND RULE* is that one offer fruit first and that the dining cloth never be devoid of greens, for when there are greens on the dining cloth, it is related in the non-Prophetic traditions that angels come to attend. One must offer the most savory dishes first, so that they have

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However, in the corresponding passage in *The Revival*, it is stated that there are five rules and they are much the same as in this presentation. Quite possibly, the number "six" is an error. It should be remarked that all of these enumerations, divisions, and headings in the text are not necessarily the work of Ghazzali himself. Later copyists and redactors doubtless had a hand in the present format of the text. Note that Ghazzali switches from "rule" (*adab*) to "intention" (*niyat*), when referring to them.

<sup>680</sup> That is, they did not waste time.

<sup>681</sup> Ḥātim Aṣamm (Hatim the Deaf): 'Abd al-Rahmān Ḥātim bin 'Ulwān. He was an ascetic and mystic of Balkh, near modern Mazar-i Sharif in Afghanistan. He died AH137/754-5CE.

their fill of them. It is the habit of gluttons to take the heaviest foods first so that more of them can be eaten, but this is disliked. It is the custom of some to put down all of the food at once so that everyone can eat what he wishes. If one puts down a variety of foods, one should not remove them quickly, for it may be that one of the guests is not yet satisfied.

*THE THIRD RULE* is that one not put an insufficient amount of food (before the guests), for this is ungenerous. Neither should one offer too much, for that is arrogance. Instead, one should make the intention that there will be no account for the excess.<sup>682</sup> Ibrahim Adham,<sup>683</sup> may God have mercy upon him, put a huge amount of food (on the dining cloth). Sufyan<sup>684</sup> said: "Art thou not afraid that this is extravagance?" Ibrahim replied: "There is no extravagance in food."

One must first put out the food for the family so that their eyes will not always be on the dining cloth, for if there is nothing left over, they will complain bitterly about the guests, and this is a crime against the guests. It is not permissible for the guests to take what is left over home with them, as is the habit of some of the Sufis, unless the host gives them his express permission to do so—not because of embarrassment before them—or unless they know that he is agreeable (to their doing this) in his heart. Then it is lawful, with the condition that no injustice be done to one's eating companions. It is forbidden to take a great deal, and if the host is unwilling, it is forbidden. There is no difference between (doing) that and theft. It is also forbidden to eat that which one's eating companion has not eaten out of shame, not pleasure.

#### THE ETIQUETTE FOR DEPARTURE

As for the rules for departure, it is that one receives permission to leave. The host must accompany him to the door of the house, for the Messenger (S) has so commanded. The host must speak pleasant words and show an open face. If he has seen some defect in the guest, he should overlook it and conceal it with good behavior, for good behavior is superior to a multitude of offerings.

In the narratives, it is related that Master Junayd<sup>685</sup> (R) was called by a child whose father had invited him. When they reached the gate of the house, the child's father did not admit him. (Junayd) went

<sup>682</sup> That is, what is left over may be taken away by the guests. (HK)

<sup>683</sup> Ibrahim Adham: Abū Ishaq Ibrāhīm bin Adham bin Mansūr bin Yazid bin Jābir al-Tamīmī al-‘Ijlī, a famous ascetic. Stories and anecdotes about his piety and asceticism are numerous. He was a member of the royal family of Balkh who became a Sufi. He died in the war with the Byzantines at Suqayn AH161/778CE.

<sup>684</sup> Sufyan Thawri, see Note 397.

<sup>685</sup> Master Junayd: Junayd, see Note 468.

back. The child came a second time and summoned him. He went (with him) and the father did not let him in. This was repeated four times to delight the heart of the child. He kept returning until the heart of the father was delighted; and (Junayd) was in the middle, idle. In each of the rejections and acceptances, there was a lesson for him that he perceived from another place.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> That is, from God.

## CHAPTER TWO: CONCERNING THE RULES OF MARRIAGE

Know that marriage<sup>687</sup> is one of the rules of conduct of the way of religion, just as eating is. As the way of religion has need of life and the survival of an (individual) human being, and life is not possible without food and drink, so in the same manner it is in need of the survival of the human species and its generation. This is not possible without conjugal intercourse. Thus, marriage is the cause of the origin of existence while nourishment is the cause of survival of that existence. Making marriage lawful is for this, not to satisfy carnal appetites. Rather, the carnal appetite that has been created (in us) was created also to be an agent and an importuner, in order to impel people to marriage so that the travelers of the path of religion may come into existence and walk the way of religion. All mankind has been created for the way of religion. About this, He said: *I have not created the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.* (Q. 51:56)

However more mankind increases (in number), so do the servants of the Divine Presence and the people of Mustafa<sup>688</sup> (S). For the sake of this the Messenger (S) said: "Marry in order to increase; for on the Day of Resurrection I shall boast of you to other peoples and Prophets, even of a child miscarried from the womb of its mother."

Consequently, the spiritual reward of the person who strives to increase the population of servants (of God), so that they may enter the way of religion to serve Him, is great. This is the reason that the rights of the father and the teacher are great, for the father is the cause of one's existence and the teacher the cause of one's learning the way. For this reason, some have said that marrying is more meritorious than engaging in acts of supererogatory worship.

As it is clear that marriage is a part of the way of religion, it becomes important to describe the rules. Their description will come in three parts: First, the Benefits and Detriments of Marriage; Second, the Rules of the Marriage Contract; and Third, the Rules of Livelihood and Living after Marriage.

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<sup>687</sup> "marriage" (*nikāh*): the Arabic word used here refers principally marriage, but can be a euphemism for conjugal intercourse

<sup>688</sup> "Mustafa" (*Mustafā*): an epithet for the Prophet Muhammad meaning "chosen, selected."

**PART ONE: CONCERNING THE BENEFITS  
AND DETERIMENTS OF MARRIAGE**

(THE FIVE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE): Know that the merit of marriage is because of its benefits. There are five benefits in marriage:

THE FIRST BENEFIT is children. Because of children, there are four spiritual rewards:

*THE FIRST SPIRITUAL REWARD* is that one will have striven in that which is loved by God Most High: the existence of mankind and the continuity of its descendants. Whoever is acquainted with the wisdom of creation will harbor no doubt that this is loved by God Most High, for whenever the owner gives his servant the land suitable for cultivation, the seed for it, and a yoke of oxen, and the tools to plough it, and sends a representative with him to explain the cultivation, the servant—if he has any wisdom—knows what the intention of the owner is in this, even if the owner does not express it in words.

God, may He be exalted, created the womb and the penis, and appointed passion in man and woman. He created the seeds of offspring in the spines and breasts of men and women; the purpose of this is not hidden from any reasonable person. When a person wastes the seed and wards off from himself the appointed (passion) with a stratagem, without doubt he has turned away from the intention of his inner nature. For this reason, the forefathers and the Companions (R) abhorred dying as a bachelor to the point that when Mu'adh<sup>689</sup> lost two wives in a plague and he himself had caught it, he said: “Give me a wife before I die. I do not want to die a bachelor.”

*THE SECOND SPIRITUAL REWARD* is that one will have made the effort, in accordance with the Messenger (S), to increase his people in which he will take pride. For this he prohibited marriage with a barren woman, for she will not give one children. He has said: “A straw mat cast down in a room is better than a barren woman.” And he has said: “A homely woman who has given birth is better than a barren beauty.” From this it is clear that marriage is not to satisfy the carnal appetite, for a beautiful woman is more appropriate for that than is a homely one.

*THE THIRD SPIRITUAL REWARD* is that one obtains the supplications of one's offspring, for it is related in the Traditions: “Among the good things which do not end, one is a righteous child, for his supplications continue after the death of his father and mother and

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<sup>689</sup> Mu'adh: Mu'adh Jabal (see Note 399).

reach them." It is also related in the Traditions: "Supplications are displayed to the dead on platters of light and they find peace because of them."

*THE FOURTH SPIRITUAL REWARD* is that, should a child die before his father so that the parent suffers that sorrow, the child becomes an intercessor for him. For the Messenger (S) says: "It is said to the infant: 'Enter heaven!' He will fall into indignation and sorrow and say: 'Certainly I shall not enter without my mother and father!'" And the Messenger (S) seized someone's clothes and pulled him, saying: "As I am pulling thee, the infant will seize his mother and father and pull them into heaven."

It is related in the Traditions: "The children will gather at the gate of heaven and shout together, weeping, crying out for their mothers and fathers until (the parents) are permitted to come among them. Each child will take then the hand of his mother and father and lead them into Paradise."

One of the saints was cautious about marriage until he had a dream one night about the Resurrection. People were being tormented with thirst. He saw a group of children with gold and silver goblets in their hands giving water to the sufferers. Then he asked for water, but they would not give him any, saying: "Thou hast no child amongst us." When he awoke, he immediately married.

*THE SECOND BENEFIT* of marriage is that it fortifies one's religion and separates carnal appetite, which is the tool of Satan, from oneself. For this the Messenger (S) said: "Whoever has married has fortified one half of his religion; whoever has not married will usually not be able to restrain his eye from looking, and his soul from evil insinuations, even though he preserves his chastity. However, marriage must be done with the intention of procreation, not to satisfy one's carnal appetite; for complying with what is loved by the Lord because it is His command is more meritorious than doing so to satisfy the agent.<sup>690</sup> The carnal appetite was created in order to be the exciter and the importuner, even though in it there is another underlying reason: a powerful pleasure has also been placed in it as a foretaste of the pleasures of the Hereafter, just as fire was created as a foretaste of the agony of the Hereafter. There is a rationale in everything that God Most High has created, but it is concealed except to the saints and theologians.

The Messenger (S) says: "There is a devil with every woman who appears. When a beautiful woman approaches one, he should go

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<sup>690</sup> That is, the carnal appetite.

home immediately and lie with his own wife, for in that sense all women are alike."

THE THIRD BENEFIT is the affection in seeing women and the repose that the soul obtains due to the society and amusement (one has) with them, which comfort is the cause of the renewal of the desire to worship, for diligence in worship brings fatigue that seizes the soul. This comfort renews the strength (to worship). 'Ali, may God honor him, says: "Do not restrain yourselves from ease and comfort completely, lest the heart become blind because of that."

The Messenger (S), during those times in which the revelations became a tremendous task for him, which his body did not possess the strength to support, would place his hand on 'Ayishah and say: "*Speak to me, O 'Ayishah!*" He wanted to strengthen himself in order to have the power to endure the burden of revelation. When he was returned to this world and his strength was restored, the thirst for that work overcame him and he would say: "*Comfort me, O Bilal!*" (with the call to formal prayer) and he would turn to formal prayer. It sometimes happened that a pleasing scent in his nostrils would strengthen him; for this he said: "*Three things have been made pleasing to me: sweet smells, women, and my pleasure in formal prayer.*" However, (he) showed partiality to formal prayer, which was the point (of that saying), for he said: "My pleasure is in formal prayer." Perfume and women are for the comfort of the body in order to have the strength for formal prayer and the pleasure that he obtained from that.

It is for this reason that the Messenger (S) prohibited the accumulation of worldly wealth. 'Umar (R) asked: "Then, what should we take from the world?" (The Prophet) replied: "*Let any of you take a remembering tongue, a grateful heart, and a believing wife.*" He said: "A remembering tongue, a grateful soul, and a devout wife; a devout wife is the companion of remembrance and gratitude."

THE FOURTH BENEFIT is that a wife takes care of the house, and performs the cooking, sweeping, and washing. If a man undertakes these, he will lag behind in knowledge, work, and worship. For this reason, a wife is a companion in the way of religion. And for this reason, Abu Sulayman Darani has said: "A good wife is not of this world; she is of the next world." That is, she gives thee the leisure to attend to the work of the Hereafter. 'Umar (R) says: "After faith, there is no blessing greater than a worthy wife."

THE FIFTH BENEFIT is that forbearance at the behavior of women, supplying their commissions, and keeping them on the way of religious law cannot be accomplished except with earnest effort, and that effort is one of most meritorious of the acts of worship. It is related in the

Traditions that providing for one's family is better than giving alms. The saints have said: "Lawful earning for one's children and family"<sup>691</sup> is an act of atonement."<sup>692</sup>

Ibn al-Mubarak was on a military expedition in defense of Islam<sup>693</sup> with a group of saints. Someone asked: "Is there any act which is more meritorious than that in which we are engaged?" They said: "We know of nothing more meritorious than this." (Ibn al-Mubarak) said: "I know. The person who has children and family and takes care of their welfare. At night, he rises from his sleep and, seeing his children with their (bed) clothes thrown off, covers them. That deed of his is superior to our expedition."

Bishr Hafi<sup>694</sup> said: "Ahmad Hanbal has seven virtues which we do not have: one is that he seeks what is lawful for himself and his family, but I seek it just for myself." It is related in the Traditions that among the sins, there is one for which there is no expiation but by enduring the trouble of (having) a family.

The wife of a saint passed away. No matter how many proposals of marriage were made to him, he was not interested. He said: "My soul is more present in loneliness and I find more determination." He remained thus until one night he dreamt that the gates of heaven were open and some men were coming down one after another and going into the air. When they reached him, the first man said: "Is this that the unfortunate man?" The second said: "Yes." A third asked: "Is that the unfortunate man?" A fourth said: "Yes." The man became frightened and was too much in awe of them to ask them (what they meant). When the last one arrived, (the saint) asked him: "Who is this unfortunate person they are taking about?" He answered: "Thou; for before this, thy worship was among the acts of striving that were carried to heaven. It is now a week since thy name has been expunged from amongst the strivers. I know not what thou hast done." When he awoke, he immediately contracted a marriage so that he might be counted among the earnest strivers (in faith). These are all the benefits of marriage for reason of which one should desire to marry.

<sup>691</sup> Ghazzali routinely uses the word *'ayyāl* (family) as a euphemism for "women of the household," or "wife/wives." This is still a common practice in conservative areas of the Islamic world.

<sup>692</sup> Or "exchange" (*ibdāl*): thus, Khadiv-Jam's reading of the text. Aslam reads it as *abdāl* (both readings are possible), in which case the translation would be "...is an act of the saints" or "...is a saintly act."

<sup>693</sup> *ghazw*: in a technical sense, it is a military campaign in defense of the faith.

<sup>694</sup> Bishr Hafi: Bishr bin al-Hārith, Abū Naṣr. Born in Persia, he became a noted ascetic and was called al-Hāfi. He died at Baghdad AH227/841CE.

(THE THREE DETRIMENTS OF MARRIAGE): As for the detriments of marriage, they are three:

THE FIRST DETRIMENT is that one may not be able to seek what is lawful, especially in such an era.<sup>695</sup> For the sake of one's family, one may fall into seeking the lawful and doubtful. This is a cause of the destruction of religion for himself and his family. No excellence compensates for this, for it is related in the Traditions: "The person will be kept near the scales and he will have good deeds, each one like a mountain. Then, they will ask him: 'From what didst thou provide for thy family?' and he will be caught in this. And for this reason, all of his good works will vanish. Then, they will cry that this is that man whose family consumed all of his good deeds, and he been caught in difficulty."

It is also written that: "The first person who will grapple with a person at the Resurrection will be his wife. She will say: 'O Lord God! Give us justice from him, for he gave us unlawful food and we did not know it. He did not teach us what was proper to learn so that we remained in ignorance.'" Therefore, anyone who dies not have property or an inheritance, or a lawful means of earning, should not marry except at the time when he is absolutely certain that he will commit adultery if he does not.

THE SECOND DETRIMENT is that attending to a family is not possible except with a good nature and patience with respect to their nonsense, with toleration of their distress, and with the setting about the arrangement of their affairs. Not everyone can do this. It may be that he distress them and become sinful because of that, or leave (them) lost. It is related in the Traditions: "He who flees his family is like a runaway slave. His formal prayer and fasting are not accepted until he returns to them." In sum, (maintaining) the soundness of the self is an obligation upon every person. It is preferable for the person who cannot cope with his own self that he not undertake the responsibility of the self of another.

Bishr Hafi was asked: "Why dost thou not marry?" He replied: "I am afraid of this verse: *And women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner.*" (Q. 2:228) Ibrahim Adham was asked: "Why dost thou not marry?" He replied: "How can I marry when I do not need a wife. How can I deceive a woman with myself?"

THE THIRD DETRIMENT is that the soul and thought become absorbed in the arrangements of family matters and are hindered from

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<sup>695</sup> "in such an era": Ghazzali is referring to his own era, of course, but the problems seem to have persisted to the present day.

remembering God Most High, the Hereafter, and the making of provision for the Hereafter. Anything that distracts thee from the remembrance of God Most High is a cause of thy destruction. For this, God Most High said: *O ye who believe, let not your wealth nor your children divert you from the remembrance of God.* (Q. 63:9) Consequently, it is better for any person not to marry who does not have the strength that the Messenger (S) had not to be diverted by family affairs from God Most High and who knows that, if he does not marry, he will always be engaged with remembrance and worship and be safe from the unlawful. However, there is no difficulty for the person who is able to live by lawful means and who is certain of his own nature and kindness and who knows that marriage will not divert him from the remembrance of God Most High. If he marries, he will continue to engage in the remembrance (of God).

## **PART TWO: CONCERNING THE MANNER OF CONTRACT AND ITS RULES; THE QUALITIES ONE SHOULD LOOK FOR IN A WOMAN**

**(THE CONDITIONS OF MARRIAGE):** As for the conditions of marriage, they are five:

**FIRST:** A guardian (for the woman): for without a guardian, the marriage is not valid. The ruler is the guardian for whoever does not have one.

**SECOND:** The agreement of the woman, unless she is a virgin. In that case, if the father or grandfather gives her (away as a bride), there is no need for her consent. It is also preferred that (the matter) be presented to her. If she is silent, that is sufficient (to indicate consent).

**THIRD:** Two just witnesses must be present. It is preferred that a number of righteous folk attend and that it not be restricted to two persons. If the two male (witnesses) are chaste so that no corruption (of theirs) is known to man or woman, the marriage is valid.

**FOURTH:** That the words *ijāb* (assent) and *qabūl* (acceptance) be pronounced by the guardian and the bridegroom, or their representatives so that they are plainly (heard). They must also say the word *nikāh* (marriage) or *tazwīj* (marrying off), or the Persian equivalents. It is the traditional practice for the guardian to speak (on behalf of the bride). After that, the sermon is read: “*In the name of God and all praise belongs to God.* I have given so-and-so in marriage with this marriage

portion.”<sup>696</sup> The husband says: “*In the name of God and all praise belongs to God.* I have accepted this marriage with this marriage portion.” It is to be preferred that he see the woman before the marriage contract so that, if he approves, he may make the contract, for there will be a greater expectation of affection. His aim and declared intention for marriage must be having offspring and restraining the eye and soul from unsuitable things. The whole of his purpose should not be passion and pleasure.

FIFTH: The woman must have the qualities that make marriage with her lawful. There about twenty qualities for which marriage is unlawful: a woman who is married to another; a woman who is observing the waiting period,<sup>697</sup> an apostate; an idolatress; a heretic who does not believe in the Resurrection, God, and the Prophet; one of the Libertines who consider men and women associating together and not praying lawful and who say: “We are certain that there will be no punishment for this”; a Christian or a Jew descended from an ancestor whose Christianity or Judaism originated after the mission of our Messenger (S); a slave while the man is able to provide the marriage portion for a free woman or able to restrain himself from adultery; the property of this man (the husband), in part or in totality,<sup>698</sup> a relative or in the prohibited degrees to the man; someone made unlawful because of sharing milk from the same woman;<sup>699</sup> unlawful because of being an in-law, as when the woman has been the wife of one of his sons, or he has previously married and also had intercourse with her daughter, granddaughter, mother, or grandmother, or the woman had been married to his father or son, or the man has four other wives and she would be the fifth.

The marriage would not be lawful if he is already married to her sister, or paternal or maternal aunt, for including her among them is not proper as there is between the two women a relationship which, if one were male and the other female, marriage would not be possible. A woman whom he has already divorced three times or bought and sold three times will not be lawful until she has married another man. (He cannot marry) a woman with whom he has exchanged curses; or while either the man or the woman is in a state of consecration for the greater or lesser Pilgrimage; or if the female is an orphan and a child: it is not

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<sup>696</sup> “marriage portion”: *kabin*. See Note 703.

<sup>697</sup> *iddat* (Arabic form: *‘iddah*): the period a woman must wait after divorce or the death of a spouse before contracting a new marriage. According to Q. 2:234, it is four months and ten days. Its purpose is to ensure that she is not with child by her previous husband.

<sup>698</sup> That is, she is a slave and the property of the husband, or he is her part owner.

<sup>699</sup> Nursing from the same woman establishes a relationship that puts them in the category of the prohibited degrees (*mahrām*) to each other, just as a brother and sister would be. Such a marriage is unlawful.

proper to marry her until she achieves puberty. Marriage with all of these women is void. These are the conditions of the lawfulness and validity of marriage.

**THE QUALITIES FOR MARRIAGE OF WOMEN:** As for the qualities that are the Practice of the Prophet to be looked for in women, they are eight:

**THE FIRST QUALITY** is chastity—and this is the foundation—for should an unchaste woman act treacherously with his property, the husband's mastery of his household will be in confusion. If she should betray him with her body and the man remain silent, it will be counted as a deficiency in honor and religion. He will become disgraced and reproached by people. If he remains silent, his life will always be troubled. If he divorces her, it may be that he will miss her; but if one is good to the unchaste, it will be a greater calamity. For, however much it is thus, it is better to divorce, unless one is enamored of her; for when someone complained about the unchasteness of his wife, the Messenger (S) said: "Divorce her." The man said: "I love her." The Prophet said: "Keep her, for if thou divorce her, thou too wilt fall into evil ways."

It is related in the Traditions: "Whoever desires a wife for property and beauty will be deprived of both. If he wants her because of religion, the aim of property and beauty will be achieved by themselves."

**THE SECOND QUALITY** is a good disposition, for a shrewish wife is ungrateful and a termagant and she will be uncontrollable. Life with her will be troubled, and she will be the cause of evil in religion.

**THE THIRD QUALITY** is beauty, for it stimulates affection. That is why seeing her before marriage is the practice of the Messenger (S) who said: "In the eyes of the women of the Helpers,<sup>700</sup> there is something<sup>701</sup> that the soul detests. Whoever wants to marry one of them should first see her." It was also said: "Every marriage which is concluded before viewing ends in sorrow and regret."<sup>702</sup> The Messenger (S) has said: "One should seek a wife for (her) religion, not her beauty." The meaning here is that one should not ask for a woman solely because of her beauty and

<sup>700</sup> "the Helpers" (*Anṣār*): the Helpers of Madinah. Those who supported the Prophet and Islam in Madinah.

<sup>701</sup> "something" (*chīzī*): in the corresponding passage in *The Revival*, Ghazzali uses the word *shayn* which means "disfigurement, marring, dishonoring," etc. It is interesting to note that the Arabic for "thing" is *shay'*. In writing, the difference between the two words *shayn* and *shay'* is minuscule (a single dot or a *hamzah*). This coincidence might invite some interesting speculations about the history of the text, although the word *shayn* is not unknown in classical Persian.

<sup>702</sup> This statement, not directly attributed to the Prophet here, appears to be proverbial.

without regard to her piety; but it does not mean that one should not take her beauty into consideration.

However, if someone's motive for marriage is having children and to observe the Practice of the Prophet only, not taking into consideration beauty, then this is a matter of asceticism. Ahmad Hanbal chose a one-eyed woman over her sister who was beautiful because it was said that the one-eyed woman was more intelligent.

THE FOURTH QUALITY is that the marriage portion<sup>703</sup> be light, for the Messenger (S) said: "The best of wives are those whose marriage portion is lighter and whose appearance is better." Making the marriage portion heavy is disapproved. The Messenger (S) made some marriages with ten dirams, and never gave more than four hundred dirams for his own offspring.

THE FIFTH QUALITY is that she not be barren, for the Messenger (S) said: "A straw mat in the corner of a room is better than a wife who does not bear children."

THE SIXTH QUALITY is that she be a virgin, for she will be closer in affection. Most of those who have had a husband remain attached to them. Jibir<sup>704</sup> (R) sought a marriage with a previously married woman.<sup>705</sup> The Messenger (S) said: "Why didst thou not marry a virgin so she could play with thee and thou with her?"

THE SEVENTH QUALITY is that she be of a respectable lineage, and that lineage be one of religion and righteousness, for without (such an) origin, she may be untutored and possess an unpleasant character, the nature of which may spread to her offspring.

THE EIGHTH QUALITY is that she not be too closely related by blood, for it is related in the Traditions that the children of such a union may be weak. Perhaps the reason is that carnal appetite is weaker with respect to relatives.

These are the qualities of women. As for the guardian who gives his own daughter in marriage, he is obliged to look out for her interests.

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<sup>703</sup> "marriage portion" (*kabin*): or "dowry." However, in Islamic law, the marriage portion is what the husband is obliged to pay his wife in the event of divorce without just cause. In Arabic, it is called *mahr al-`arūs*. See also Note 1380.

<sup>704</sup> Jibir (*Jābir*): The son of a man slain at the battle of Uhud, he embraced Islam and accompanied the Prophet on many military expeditions. He died in Madinah AH78/697-8CE at the age of 94. (Hughes)

<sup>705</sup> "previously married woman" (*thayyibah*): a previously married woman whose marriage has been consummated.

He should choose some one who is suitable, and beware of ill-tempered, ugly, and insolvent men. If they are not suitably matched, then the marriage is not permissible. It is not permissible to give her to someone dissolute. The Messenger (S) said: "The generations of him who gives his child to someone dissolute will be cut off." And he said: "Marriage is bondage; be careful about to whom thou givest thine own child as a bondservant."

### **PART THREE: CONCERNING LIFE WITH WOMEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE MARRIAGE TO THE END**

Know that since it is clear that marriage is a pillar among the pillars of religion, one must observe the rules of conduct of religion in it. If not, there would be no difference between the marriage of human beings and copulation of animals. So, in this, one must observe twelve rules:

**THE FIRST RULE** is the marriage feast. This is a confirmed Practice of the Prophet. The Messenger (S) said to 'Abdur-Rahman 'Awf when he had married: "Give a feast, even if it is only with a single sheep." And if one does not have a sheep, whatever amount of food one places before his friends is a marriage feast. When the Messenger (S) married Safiyah,<sup>706</sup> he made a feast of barley meal and dates. So, however much is possible must be done to honor the act of marriage. It ought to be held within the first three days (after the marriage ceremony). If there is a delay, not later than the (end of the) first week.

It is also the Practice of the Prophet to play tambourines and publicize the wedding and to display joy at it, for the dearest of creation is mankind and marriage is the opening of the gate for their creation. So, this joy is in its proper place. Singing and dancing and (playing) tambourines at such a time are of the Practice of the Prophet.

It is related that Rabi'<sup>707</sup> the daughter of Mu'awwidh said: "On the day following the night that I was married, the Messenger (S) came

<sup>706</sup> Safiyah: Safiyah bint Huyayy bin Akhtab. The eleventh wife of the Prophet, she was born at Madinah of the Jewish tribe of the Banu al-Nadir. When the tribe was expelled from Madinah in AH4/625-6CE because of accusations of helping the Quraysh against the Muslims, her family settled in Khaybar. Two or three years later, when she was about 17, she was married Kinanah bin al-Rabi'. She was taken prisoner in the fortress of Khaybar when it fell to the Muslims AH7/628CE. Her husband was executed and she was married to the Prophet. Despite these tumultuous circumstances, she became devoted to him and was on good terms with the Prophet's daughter Fatimah. She died AH50/670CE or AH52/672CE.

<sup>707</sup> Rubaya' the daughter of Mu'awwidh: She was a woman of the Ansār (the Helpers of Madinah) who participated in battles by nursing the wounded and helping to carry off the dead. The Prophet attended her wedding in Madinah, and Ghazzali refers to the incident

(to us). Servant girls were playing the tambourine and singing. When they spied him, they started to sing praises of the Messenger (S) in verse. The Messenger (S) said: ‘Go back to what ye were singing before.’ He did not permit them to sing his praises.” It is not seemly to mix the serious with the playful. Praise of him should be purely serious.

THE SECOND RULE is that one should engage in good behavior with women. The meaning of good behavior is not that one should not displease them; rather, one should suffer and tolerate their distress. One should be patient with their absurd talk and ingratitude. It is related in the Traditions that: “Women have been created of weakness and vulnerability. The remedy for their weakness is silence, the remedy for their vulnerability is making their home a prison.”

The Prophet says: “Whoever is patient with the ill-temper of his family (wife) is given as many spiritual rewards as Job (A) was given. For any wife who is patient with the ill-temper of her husband, there is as much spiritual reward as there is for Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh.”<sup>708</sup> The last thing which the Messenger (S) was heard to say at the time of his death was his whispering: “Keep performing formal prayer, behave well with bondservants,<sup>709</sup> and be patient (*Allāh, Allāh!*) with the talk of women. They are prisoners in your hands. Make life good for them.”

The Messenger (S) used to bear the anger and the bile of women. One day the wife of ‘Umar (R) answered him angrily. ‘Umar said: “O vile woman! Art thou talking back to me?” She said: “Yes, for the Prophet is better than thou and his wives talk back to him.” ‘Umar said: “If that is the case, God help Hafsa,<sup>710</sup> for she will be humbled!” At that moment he saw Hafsa, his own daughter and the wife of the Prophet (S), and said to her: “Beware that thou dost not talk back to the Messenger (S), and do not be deceived by (what) the daughter of Abu Bakr (does),”<sup>711</sup> because the Prophet loves her and tolerates her.”

One day, one of his wives struck the Messenger (S) on the chest in anger. Her mother scolded her, crying: “Why didst thou do that?” The Messenger (S) intervened and said to the mother: “Overlook it, for they do more than that and I overlook it.” And he said: *“The best of you is the best of you with his family, and I am the best of you to my family.”*

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of the women’s singing, but he does not go into detail. The women were singing an ode about the battle of Badr in which there was the verse: “We have among us the Prophet who knows what is to happen tomorrow.” When he heard that verse, he ordered them to stop, saying that only God knows what will happen tomorrow.

<sup>708</sup> Asiyah (*Āsiyah*), the wife of Pharaoh: the wife of the pharaoh of the story of Joseph. One of the four perfect women. She is referred to in the Quran (66:11), but not by name.

<sup>709</sup> “bondservants” (*bandagān*): or “slaves.”

<sup>710</sup> Hafsa (*Hafṣah*), the daughter of ‘Umar bin al-Khattab and a wife of the Prophet.

<sup>711</sup> ‘Umar is referring to Āyishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr.

THE THIRD RULE is one should joke and play with them and not be moody; one should approach them at their own level. No one has made more pleasantry with his family than the Messenger (S), to the point that he raced with 'Ayishah to see who would win. The Messenger (S) won. They raced another way and 'Ayishah (R) won. The Messenger (S) said: "One to one, one washes the other." That is, they were even.

One day, he heard the sound of Africans<sup>712</sup> dancing. He said to 'Ayishah: "Wouldst thou like to see them?" She said: "I would." He approached her and lowered his hand so that 'Ayishah placed her chin on the Prophet's (S) forearm and watched (them) for a long time. The Messenger (S) said: "O 'Ayishah, is not this enough?" She said: "Be still." He said it to the third time, then she said that it was enough.

'Umar (R) says with his usual seriousness and severity in affairs: "A man must be like a child with his women; and when they want mastery from him, then he must be like men." It has been said that: "A man should be smiling when he enters and quiet when he comes out; he should eat whatever he finds and not ask for what he does not find."

THE FOURTH RULE is that joking and play should not reach the point where one loses one's dignity completely. One should not abet them in vain passions. Indeed, when one sees something that is against virtue or the religious law, he should chastise them. Should he overlook it, they will ridicule him. *Men are the set up over women.* (Q. 4:34) The man must always be dominant. The Messenger (S) said: "Wretched is (the man who is) the slave of his wife." It has been said that: "One should consult with women and then do the opposite of what they say." In reality, a woman's self is just like thy self, which, if thou permittest it, will go out of control and exceed all limits. Mending it will be a difficult task.

In short, there is a weakness in women, the treatment for which is forbearance; and a crookedness, the treatment for which is diplomacy or punishment. A man must be as proficient as a physician who observes each treatment at the proper time. In all, there must be patience and tolerance, for it is related in the Traditions that: "The similitude of woman is that of a rib. If thou wouldst want to straighten it, it would break."

THE FIFTH RULE is that one should observe moderation in talk about honor and restrain (them) from anything that may be the source of

<sup>712</sup> "Africans" (*zangiyān*): the Persian term refers to the dark-skinned inhabitants of eastern coastal regions and northeastern Africa, the part of black Africa of greatest geographical experience for the medieval Muslims. The word appears to be related to Zanzibar, although it was more often used generally, to designate the people of Ethiopia and the eastern coast of Africa.

detriment. As much as one can, one should not let them go outside, or beyond the roof and gate. One should not let them be seen by anyone not of the prohibited degrees of relationship. One should not let them see such a person. One should not let them be seen by men through embrasures or windows, for all calamities arise from the eyes, and that does not happen within the house; rather, from embrasures, windows, and roofs. It is not proper to be lenient about this. But one should not be suspicious for no reason, find fault, and be excessively jealous, or overdo investigation into the heart of affairs.

Once, when the Messenger (S) returned from a journey, it was nearly night. He admonished (the men, saying: "Let no one go to his house suddenly this night. Wait until tomorrow." Two men disobeyed; each one saw disallowed things in his home. The Commander of the Believers, 'Ali, may God honor him, says: "Do not be excessive in guarding the honor of your women, for people will learn about it and talk rudely about them."

The basis of guarding the honor of women is preventing them from seeing (men) of the prohibited degrees.<sup>713</sup> The Messenger (S) asked Fatimah (R): "Which are the best women?" She replied: "Those whom men do not see and those who do not see men." The Messenger (S) was delighted and embraced her: "*Offspring, one of the other.*" (Q. 3:34)

Mu'adh<sup>714</sup> struck his own wife for looking out of a window. He saw the woman taking a biting out of an apple and giving the rest to a male bondman. He beat her.

'Umar (R) said: "Do not cloth women in fine garments so that they may sit at home. If they have fine clothes, the desire to go outside will be born in them." At the time of the Messenger (S), there was an edict permitting them to go well covered to the mosque. They would stand in the last row (for obligatory formal prayer), but during the time of the Companions this was interdicted, for 'Ayishah (R) said: "If the Prophet could see how the women are now turning themselves out, he would not have let them go to the mosque." Today, it is preferable that they be prohibited from attending mosques, assemblies, and being seen, except for elderly ladies wearing old veils in which there are no gaps. Harm more often arises from being seen and from gatherings. It is not permissible for women to pass wherever there is a fear of turmoil.

A woman should guard her eyes, for a blind man once entered the house of the Messenger (S) where 'Ayishah and another woman were sitting. They did not get up (to leave), saying: "He is blind." The Messenger (S) said: "If he is blind, ye have your sight."

<sup>713</sup> "the prohibited degrees" (*nā maḥram*): See Note 303.

<sup>714</sup> Mu'adh: Mu'adh Jabal (see Note 399).

THE SIXTH RULE is that one be generous in providing for them and not be tightfisted. At the same time, one should not be extravagant, but know that the spiritual reward of providing for one's family is greater than that for giving alms. The Messenger (S) says: "Of the dinar spent in defending the faith, the dinar spent in freeing a slave, the dinar spent for the destitute, and the dinar spent in providing for one's family, the most meritorious and most profitable is that spent upon one's family."

One must not eat any delicious food alone. If one wants to do so, one should do it out of sight. One should not describe in front of them a food which one will not provide. Ibn Sirin says: "One should have sweetmeats or other sweets prepared once a week, for it is not generous to totally preclude them." One should eat one's meals with the family, around the dining cloth, when guests are not present, for it is so good to do so that "God Most High and the angels bless the house and its inhabitants when they eat together."<sup>715</sup>

The main thing is that that which is spent be lawfully obtained; for there is no treachery or oppression greater than one's nourishing them with that which is unlawful.

THE SEVENTH RULE is that one must instruct one's women in the religious knowledge of all that is necessary for them, such as the performance of formal prayer, purification, the menses, etc. If they are not taught this, the women are obliged to go outside and enquire (about these things). However, if the man teaches his wife, it is not permissible for her to go out without permission. If the man stints in this, he is in rebellion (against God), for God Most High says: *Ward off from yourselves a fire.* (Q. 66:6) Protect yourselves from hell!

She must learn this much, that if the menstrual flow stops before the setting of the sun, she must make up the noon and mid-afternoon obligatory formal prayers. If it ceases before the rising of the sun, the sunset and early evening obligatory formal prayers should be made up. However, most women do not know this.

THE EIGHTH RULE is that if there are two wives, one must treat them both equally, for it is related in the Traditions that: "Whoever inclines to one wife will come on the Day of Resurrection half crooked." One should observe equality in gifts and in spending the night with the. However, it is not obligatory in affection and sexual intercourse.

The Messenger (S) spent each night with (a different one) of his wives. However, he loved 'Ayishah the most and would say: "Lord God! I strive (to be just) with everything I possess, but my heart is not under my control."

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<sup>715</sup> Both AA and HK put this statement between quotation marks, but do not attribute it.

If a person is fed up with one wife and does not want to embrace her, he must divorce her and not keep her fettered.

The Messenger (S) wanted to divorce Sawdah, for she had become older. She said: "O Prophet of God, I have given my turn to 'Ayishah. Do not divorce me so that I may remain among thy wives until the Resurrection." He did not divorce her, but spent two nights with 'Ayishah and one night with each of his other wives.

THE NINTH RULE is that when a wife is disobedient and does not obey her husband, she should be called to obedience with kindness and leniency. If she does not obey, at night separate thy bedclothes and in them turn thy back upon her. If she does not obey, keep the bedclothes apart for three nights. If this does not produce the desired result, then one should beat her, but not on the face, nor very hard, lest something be broken. If she is deficient in performing formal prayer or other religious obligations, it is lawful to be angered with her for a month or as long as (necessary), for the Messenger (S) was angry with (and separated himself from) all of his wives for a month.

THE TENTH RULE is about lying with them. One should turn away from the direction of formal prayer and, at the beginning, please her with talk, play, kisses, and embraces, for the Messenger (S) has said: "A man should not fall upon a woman like a beast. Before intercourse there should be a messenger." He was asked: "What is that messenger?" He said: "A kiss."

When one is about to begin, one should say: "*In the name of the All-High, the All-Powerful. God is greater, God is greater, God is greater.*" And it is better if one recites the chapter commencing *Say, He is God, the One!* (Q. 112). Then he says: "*O God! Ward off Satan from us and ward off Satan from that which we have been provided.*" It is related in the Traditions that whoever recites these things—and if a child results—it will be safe from the devil.

At the moment of ejaculation, one should think in his soul *Praise be to God who hath created man from fluid and hath made for him kindred by blood and kindred by marriage.* (Q. 25:54)<sup>716</sup> Then, when he has ejaculated, he should be patient until his wife also experiences orgasm, for the Messenger (S) has said: "Three things are of the infirmity of a man: one is that he sees someone whom he likes but cannot remember his name; another is that his brother does him some good service but he rejects it; and the other is that he engage in sexual

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<sup>716</sup> The Quranic verse from which this is taken actually starts with *He it is* instead of the *praise be to God* that Ghazzali uses.

intercourse before kisses and embraces, and when he has accomplished his need, he does not wait until the woman also accomplishes hers.”

It is related from ‘Ali, may God honor him, Mu‘awiyah,<sup>717</sup> and Abu Hurayrah that sexual intercourse on the first night of the month and the last night (of the month) and the night of the full moon is an abomination, for during those nights devils attend at the time of intercourse. One must restrain oneself from intercourse at the time of the menses. However, it is permissible to sleep naked. It is not proper (to have intercourse) before the greater ablution of menstruation. After one act of intercourse, if one wishes another, one should wash oneself. While in a state of impurity, if one wishes to eat something he should perform the lesser ablution. If one wishes to go to sleep, he should also perform the lesser ablution, even if he is still in a state of impurity. That is the Practice of the Prophet. Before performing the greater ablution, one should cut the hair or nails, so that they, in a state of impurity, not be separated from one.<sup>718</sup>

It is preferred that semen reach the womb and not return. If one practices withdrawal,<sup>719</sup> the correct view is that doing so is not unlawful. A man asked the Messenger (S): “I have a bondservant who is a maid and I do not want her to become pregnant and not be able to perform her work.” He said: “Practice withdrawal, for if it is ordained, the child will come into existence itself.” Later the man returned (and said): “A child has been conceived.” Jabir says: “*We used to practice coitus interruptus while the Quran was being revealed.* We practiced withdrawal while the revelation was occurring and we were not prohibited from that.”

THE ELEVENTH RULE concerns the coming of a child. When it is born, one must make the call to obligatory formal prayer in its right ear and the call to assemble in ranks in the left ear. In the Traditions, it is related: “The child of whoever does this will be safe from childhood diseases.”

One must give it a good name. It is related in the Traditions that the most beloved names to God Most High are ‘Abdullah (Servant of God) and ‘Abd al-Rahman (Servant of the Merciful). It is the Practice of

<sup>717</sup> Mu‘awiyah: Presumably Mu‘awiyah bin Abū Sufyān, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty (rgd. AH41/661CE to AH60/680CE). He moved the capital to Damascus. Viewed quite differently by Sunni and Shiah historians, he consolidated the enormous expansion of the Arab empire from the Atlantic to India. With the exception of Cyprus, some territories in the Caucasus, and parts of Palestine, all of his empire remains predominantly Muslim to the present day. In a sense, he transformed the Islamic empire into an Arab empire.

<sup>718</sup> That is, the whole body is in a state of ritual impurity. Cutting the hair or nails before purification would leave the cuttings impure. It is better to perform that task after purification.

<sup>719</sup> “withdrawal”: the reference is to *coitus interruptus*.

the Prophet to bestow the name upon the child as soon as it is born. Slaughtering a sheep for the newborn is a confirmed Practice of the Prophet: for a daughter, one sheep; for a son, two; but if there is only one, it is permitted. ‘Ayishah (R) has said: “The bones of the sacrificed animal should not be broken.”

It is the Practice of the Prophet that when a child is delivered, the mouth should be opened with something sweet. On the seventh day, the head should be shaved and silver or gold given in alms equal to the weight of the hair.

One must not be displeased if it is a girl, nor should one show too much joy if it is a boy, for one does not know in which one the goodness lies. The girl may be more blessed and there may be greater spiritual reward in her. The Messenger (S) said: “God Most High will be kind to him who has three daughters or three sisters and suffers their distress and arranges their affairs because of his kindness to them.” Someone said: “O Prophet of God, if there are two?” He said: “If there are two, it is the same.” Another asked: “If there is one?” He replied: “If there is one, it is the same.” And the Messenger (S) also said: “Whoever has one daughter is afflicted; whoever has two daughters is burdened; and whoever has three daughters, O Muslims, aid him, for he shall be in heaven with me as though we were two fingers.” That is, close.

The Messenger (S) said: “Whoever buys the first fruits in the market and takes them home, they are like alms. He must begin with the girls and then the boys, for whoever gladdens the heart of a girl; it is as though he were weeping out of fear of God Most High. The body of whoever weeps out of fear of God Most High will be unlawful for the fire.

THE TWELFTH RULE is that, if possible, one should not divorce; for among all permitted things, God Most High abhors (most) divorce. In short, giving sorrow to someone is not permitted except under necessity.

When it is necessary to divorce, do not pronounce it more than once, for three times at one time is repugnant. It is unlawful to pronounce a divorce during the menses. And in a pure state, it is also unlawful after intercourse.

One should be apologetic in divorce, in the way of kindness, and not divorce with acrimony and disdain. One should give her presents to please her soul, and one should never disclose her secrets to anyone. Nor should one disclose for what fault one has divorced her. A man was asked: “Why art thou divorcing thy wife?” He answered: “One cannot reveal the secrets of one’s own wife” After he had divorced her, he was asked: “Why didst thou do it?” He replied: “What have I to do with another woman that I should talk about her?”

**THE RIGHTS OF A HUSBAND OVER HIS WIFE**

That which has been discussed is about the rights of wives over husbands, but the rights of a husband over his wife are greater, for she is in reality bound to the man. It is related in the Traditions that if prostration to someone other than God were lawful, wives would have been commanded to prostrate themselves before their husbands.

The rights of a man over his wife are: that she sit in the house and not go out without his permission, or go to the door, or on the roof. She should not mix excessively with the neighbors or talk too much. She should not go to them unnecessarily. She should not say anything about her husband except that which is good. If there is some rudeness between them—in association or intercourse—she should not relate it (to others). She should be zealous in all of his affairs with respect to his aims and pleasure. She should not misappropriate his property and she should seek his advice in all things. She should maintain her compassion. When some one knocks at the door, she should reply in a manner so that the visitor not recognize her and she should veil herself before all of her husband's acquaintances so that they would not know her again. With her husband, she should be satisfied with what there is and not demand more. She must give her husband's rights precedence over the rights of her relatives. She must always keep herself clean to be suitable for conversation, intercourse, and association. She must do whatever service she is capable of and not be vain about her own beauty with him. She should not be ungrateful for any good things he does for her, nor say: "What hast thou ever done for me?" She should not continually look for faults without cause and not become angry and not demand buying and selling or divorce, for the Messenger (S) says: "I looked into hell. I saw more women there. I asked: 'Why is it thus?' They replied: 'They find fault much with their husbands and are ungrateful to them.'"

## CHAPTER THREE: CONCERNING THE RULES OF EARNING AND TRADE

Since the world is the way station of the provisioning for the Hereafter and a human being needs food and clothing, and such things are not possible without earning, one must learn the rules of conduct for work. A person who devotes all of himself to the work of the world is unfortunate; a person who devotes all of himself to the Hereafter and trusts (in God) is fortunate. However, the most just balance is that one busy oneself in both one's livelihood and the next life; but the object must be the next life, and the livelihood must be for the tranquillity of the next life.

As for that which must be learned about the orders and rules of earning a livelihood, they are explained in five parts: First, Concerning the Virtue and the Spiritual Reward of Earning; Second, Concerning the Prerequisites of Transactions; Third, Concerning the Maintenance of Fairness in Transactions; Fourth, Concerning the Benevolence Behind Fairness; and Fifth, Concerning the Maintenance of the Compassion of Religion in Mutual Transactions.

### PART ONE: CONCERNING THE VIRTUE AND SPIRITUAL REWARD OF EARNING

Know that earning one's livelihood lawfully in order to keep oneself and one's family not dependent upon others and in self-sufficiency is one of the earnest strivings in the way of religion and is more meritorious than numerous acts of worship. One day, the Messenger (S) was sitting with his Companions when a strong young man passed by them at the first light of morning. He was on his way to his shop in the market. The Companions said: "It is a shame his early rising was not in the way of God Most High!" The Messenger (S) said: "Speak not thus, for if he is going in order to make himself, his father and mother, or his wife and children independent of other people. He is on the path of God Most High. But if he is going for the glory of this world, boasting, and power, then he is on the path of Satan."

The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever seeks what is lawful from the world so that he may be independent of people, or his neighbors and relatives, is performing a good deed. He will come on the Day of Resurrection, his face shining like the full moon." And he said: "The truthful merchant will stand on the Day of Judgment together with the truly righteous and the martyrs." And he said: "God Most High loves the craftsman." And he said: "The most lawful thing is the earnings of the craftsman when he follows (good) counsel." And he said: "Engage in business, for the sustenance of people is nine tenths from trade." And he

said: "For whoever opens the door of begging to himself, God Most High opens seventy doors of poverty to him."

Jesus (A) saw a man and said to him: "What art thou doing?" The man replied: "I am worshipping." (Jesus) asked: "Whence didst thou get thy food?" He said: "I have a brother who arranges for my food." Jesus said: "So thy brother is more pious than thou art." 'Umar (R) said: "Do not cease working and say: 'God Most High, give me my livelihood.' God Most High will not send down gold and silver from heaven." And Luqman the Wise counseled his son, saying: "Do not stop earning, for the religion of whoever is poor and in need (of the help) of the people is shallow, his intelligence weak, and his manliness nullified. People look upon him with contempt."

Someone asked one of the saints: "Is the worshipper superior or the honest merchant?" He answered: "The honest merchant, for he is in a struggle (*jihād*). Satan has his sights set upon him by way of the weighing<sup>720</sup> and the giving and taking (of business). He opposes him." 'Umar (R) says: "There would be no better place for death to take me than in the market seeking what is lawful for my family."

Ahmad bin Hanbal was asked: "What dost thou say about the man who sits in the mosque worshipping and who says: 'God Most High Himself will cause my sustenance to appear.'" He replied: "Such a man is ignorant and does not know the Religious Law, for the Prophet (S) says: 'God Most High has bound my sustenance in the shadow of a spear'; that is, in waging war."

Awza'i<sup>721</sup> saw Ibrahim Adham carrying a bundle of firewood on his shoulders.<sup>722</sup> He said: "How long will this earning of thy livelihood last, while thy brothers are rendered prosperous from thy pains?" He answered: "Be still, for in the Traditions it is said that God Most High will necessarily give a place in paradise to whoever rises to seek lawful (earnings) in a situation of humiliation."

**QUESTION:** If someone asks about that which the Messenger (S) said: "*I was not given the revelation: 'Amass wealth and be one of the merchants'; rather, I was given the revelation: 'Extol thy Lord with praise and be one of those prostrating themselves (before Him) and worship thy Lord until there comes to thee the Certainty.'*" (Q. 15:98-99) He said: "I was not told: 'Amass wealth and be one of the merchants'; rather (I) was told: 'Praise (Him), be one of the prostrators, and worship

<sup>720</sup> That is, the temptation to give false weights for goods.

<sup>721</sup> Awza'i: Awzā'i, Abū 'Amr Ḥabd al-Rahmān bin ḤAmr (747 - c. 775CE). Born in Baalbek and died in Beirut. A founder of a legal system in early Islam. (*Fihrist*)

<sup>722</sup> Literally: "his neck."

God Most High until the end of thy life.”<sup>723</sup> Therefore, this is proof that worship is more meritorious than engaging in business.

[ANSWER]:<sup>724</sup> The answer is that thou knowest that for anyone who has a sufficiency of means for himself and his family, it is not contested that worship is better than engaging in business. For, if anyone has more than that which is sufficient for himself and his family, there is no merit in earning more. On the contrary, there is loss and attachment to the world: that is the beginning of all sinning. And for that person who does not have property, but receives a stipend from the property of beneficial agencies and religious endowments, not engaging in business is preferred. These are for four (types) of person:

(1) Either the person who is busy studying subjects that will have a religious benefit for the people such as the study of the Religious Law, or a worldly matter such as the study of medicine; (2) or the person who works for the people in the judiciary, endowments, or beneficial agencies; (3) or the person who has the inside him an opening to the states of the ecstasy of the Sufis; (4) or the person who engages in private worship and acts of external worship in a house of dervishes endowed for such persons. For such persons, it is better that they not engage in trade.

Therefore, if their sustenance—without begging or incurring obligations—will be from the hands of the people and it is an era in which the people are eager (to perform) such goodness, not engaging in trade is preferable. There was a person from among the saints for whom there were three hundred and sixty friends; he would always be engaged in worship and the guest of one of them every evening. His friends were the facilitators of this worship and they kept him free of anxiety. This is a cause for the opening of the gates of goodness to the people. There was (also) the person who had thirty friends and during each month, he would be with one them one evening.

But if the times be such that the people have no eagerness to offer one sustenance without begging and enduring degradation, engaging in a trade is to be preferred. Begging is a great sin and only becomes lawful when absolutely necessary—except for the person whose degree is great and his knowledge very beneficial and his degradation in the search for sustenance will be little. In that case, we may say: “His refraining from trade is better.”

As for the person who keeps his soul to himself and outwardly engages in earning, such earning is better for him, for the essence of all

<sup>723</sup> This is Ghazzali's translation and paraphrase.

<sup>724</sup> From the AA text.

acts of worship is the remembrance of God Most High. In the midst of earning, one's soul can be with God Most High.

## PART TWO: CONCERNING THE STUDY OF EARNING SO THAT IT MAY BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RELIGIOUS LAW

Know that this topic is long and we have discussed all of it in the books of religious jurisprudence. Therefore, in this book we shall discuss only that much which is most necessary, so that everyone may know that. If something becomes difficult, he may enquire about it. Whoever does not know this may fall into the unlawful and unlawful profit, without realizing that he should have asked about it.

Most business dealings are of six types of transaction: sale, profit and usury,<sup>725</sup> forward buying, rent and hire, loan, and commercial partnership. Let us relate all of the conditions of these contractual agreements:

**THE FIRST CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS A SALE.** Acquiring the knowledge of selling is a religious obligation; no one can pass over this. 'Umar (R) used to go the market wielding a scourge and say: "Let there not be anyone doing business in this market who has not learned the religious law of selling, for he will fall into usury whether he wants to or not."

And know that selling has three elements: The first is the buyer and the second the seller—who are called the parties to the contract.<sup>726</sup> The next is the merchandise or service, which is called “that which is contracted”.<sup>727</sup> And the third is the utterance of the word “sale”.

**THE FIRST ELEMENT** is that of the parties to the contract. A merchant must not make a transaction with five classes of people: a child, a madman, a slave, a blind person, and one whose property is obtained unlawfully.

As for the child who has not reached puberty, in the opinion of Shafi'i (R), his transaction of selling is not valid, even if done with the permission of his guardian. The case of a mad person is the same. Whatever one receives from them is by way of surety, in case it be lost. They owe no indemnity for whatever one gives them if it be lost by them.

As for the slave, his buying and selling without the permission of his master is invalid. It is not lawful for a butcher, baker of bread, grocer, or the like to do business with him until he has heard the order of his

<sup>725</sup> “usury” (*ribā*): excessive profit.

<sup>726</sup> “the parties to the contract” (*‘aqid*): that is, the buyer and the seller.

<sup>727</sup> “that which is contracted” (*ma‘qūd ‘alayhi*): that is, the goods or merchandise to be sold.

master, has received information (of that order) from a just person, or it is well-known in that town that (the slave) has permission (from his master to conduct such transactions). If (a merchant) receives something from (the slave) without such permission, (the merchant) is responsible for it. However, if (a merchant) gives something to (the slave), (the slave is not liable for it) until he has been freed.

As for the blind person, his transactions are void unless conducted with a sighted representative. However, he is liable for whatever he receives, for he is responsible and free.

As for the persons whose sustenance is unlawfully obtained, such as male and female coquettes,<sup>728</sup> oppressors, thieves, usurers, wine-drinkers, musicians and (professional) mourners, perjurors, and acceptors of bribes—transactions with all of these are not lawful. However, if one does so and learns the truth (afterwards), that property which (in itself) was not forbidden is lawful. But, if one learns that the property was not in fact the other's (to sell), then, (the transaction) is nullified. If there is doubt, one should investigate. If more of the property was lawful and the unlawful less, then the transaction is valid, but not devoid of doubtfulness with regard to its legality. If more of it was unlawful and the lawful less, we do not say that the transaction is manifestly invalid, but this doubt remains: that it is close to unlawfulness and the peril is great.

As for Christians and Jews, transactions with them are valid, but copies (of the Holy Quran) and Muslim slaves should not be sold to them. If they are warriors, weapons should not be sold to them, for these transactions are invalid according to the obvious doctrine and (the seller) becomes a rebel (against God).

The Libertines are atheists.<sup>729</sup> Transactions with them are invalid, for their blood and property is impure. Indeed, they can have no property. Marriage with them is unlawful. The rule concerning them is that of the rule concerning the apostate. By the criteria of the seven doubts that we have cited in the Prolegomena, whoever considers drinking wine, sitting with women not of the prohibited degrees, or not performing the obligatory formal prayers lawful is an atheist. Transactions and marriage with such a person are not binding.

<sup>728</sup> Literally: Turks (*Turkān*). During the classical period of Persian literature, the Turks were famous for their beauty and pale skin. Hence, they were much admired and prized as entertainers and sexual partners. Compensation often figured in their dealings. Such money would not, from the religious point of view, be lawfully earned.

<sup>729</sup> "Libertines (*Abāhatiyān*) are atheists": See Note 165 about the Libertines. To describe their beliefs, Ghazzali uses the word *zindiq*, here translated as "atheists." The English word expresses his strong disapproval of them, although the term can also refer to dualists, fireworshippers, heretics, the impious, etc.

**THE SECOND ELEMENT** is the property with which the transaction is concerned. There are six conditions which must be observed:

The first condition is that it not be unclean. The sale of dogs, swine, dung, bones, wine, pork, and oil made from carrion is invalid. However, (the sale of) pure oil into which something unclean has fallen is not forbidden. The same is true for unclean clothing. However, a bladder of musk or the eggs of the silkworm may be sold, for the truth of the matter is that both are clean.

The second condition is that it have some benefit, for that is the desired end. The sale of mice, snakes, scorpions, and insects of the earth is invalid. The profit for a conjuror<sup>730</sup> from a snake has no basis. The sale of a single grain of wheat or something similarly trivial in which there is no honest purpose is also void.

However, the sale of cats, honeybees, panthers, lions, wolves, and anything in which there is a profit in their pelts or their slaughter is lawful. The sale of parrots, peacocks, and gorgeous birds is lawful. Their usefulness lies in the comfort derived from admiring their beauty or listening to their songs. However, the sale of lyres, harps, or viols is invalid, for their uses are forbidden. They should be destroyed.

As for images made of clay so that children may play with them, if they be in the form of animal, their the sale is null and void and the money from them is unlawful. They should be smashed. However, forms of trees and plants are lawful. As for trays and cloth upon which there are pictures, their sale is lawful. Spreading such cloth or making pillows (of it) is lawful, but wearing clothes (so decorated) is not lawful.

The third condition is that the goods be the property of the seller. The sale of other people's property is unlawful, even if it is that of one's husband, father, or child. If someone should sell something and then receive permission (from the owner) to sell it, the sale does not become valid, for the permission must precede (the sale).

The fourth condition is that the thing sold must be capable of being transferred. The sale of a slave who has run away, fish in a pond, and birds in the air, a foal in the belly of the mare, of the semen (in the testicles) of a (stud) horse is invalid, for none of these can be delivered immediately. (The sale of) hair on the skin of an animal or milk in the udders (of animals) is invalid, for the delivery of such milk will entail mixture with the fresh milk produced (after the moment of sale).<sup>731</sup> The sale of something pawned without the permission of holder is invalid. The sale of a female slave who has borne (her owner) a child is invalid, for delivering her (to another) is not lawful. The sale of a female slave

<sup>730</sup> *musha<sup>c</sup>bid*: lit: juggler, conjuror. Here it refers to a snake charmer.

<sup>731</sup> The same would apply, of course, to the aforementioned hair on the skin of an animal, as it would continue to grow after the sale and consequently not be part of the original transaction.

who has a small child without the child, or the sale of the child without the mother is unlawful, for it is unlawful to separate them.

The fifth condition is that the exact goods, in amount and description, be made explicit. However, it may happen that the exact identity is not known, for some one may say: "I shall sell thee a sheep from all of this flock, or a piece of linen from among these pieces of linen—whichever thou wishest." Such a sale is invalid; rather the (sheep or piece of linen) must be separated by pointing out, then sold. If one says: "I shall sell thee ten yards of this land, starting from whichever direction thou desire," the sale is also invalid.

Moreover, it is necessary to know the amount when it is visible to the eye. If someone says: "I shall sell (it) to thee for the same sum for which such-and-such a person sold his own clothing, or an equal weight of gold or silver"—without knowing the amount—it is not lawful. But, if one says: "I shall sell this wheat to thee either with this amount of gold or silver," and he sees it, (the sale) is lawful.

Now, the knowledge of the description (of goods) is obtained by sight. The sale of something that is unseen or seen after a long time and, for example, has been altered by the passage of time, is invalid. The sale of the fine linen called *tawzi*<sup>732</sup> in sackcloth, rolled cloth, and wheat in the ear is invalid. When buying a female slave, one must look at her hair, her hands, and feet, and that which is the custom of the slave dealers to display. If one does not see everything, the sale is not valid. However, the sale of walnuts, almonds, beans, pomegranates, and eggs, is correct, even though they are concealed with an outer covering. The advisable thing is that such things be sold as they are. The sale of both unripe beans and unripe walnuts in their shells is lawful out of necessity. The sale of the drink (called) *fuqqa*<sup>733</sup> is invalid, for it is concealed, but drinking it is lawful as a perquisite.<sup>734</sup>

The sixth condition is that the sale of whatever is bought be made while it is in one's possession. One must first obtain it, then sell it.

*THE THIRD ELEMENT* is the contract; there is no escape from putting it in words. One must say: "I have sold this to thee." And (the buyer) must say: "I have bought it," or "I have given thee this for that."<sup>735</sup> And the other says: "I have received it," or "I accept it," or in words from which the meaning of the sale is plainly understood, if it is not

<sup>732</sup> *tawzi* so called from the name of the place of its manufacture, Tawz, near Kazerun in southern Iran.

<sup>733</sup> *fuqqa*: a drink made from grain or fruit that was bottled and allowed to lightly ferment; hence, it was concealed from view. The Arabic root suggests "popping, crackling"; hence, "bubbly."

<sup>734</sup> "as a perquisite" (*bi-dastūrī*): something thrown in extra (in a transaction); something placed upon something else, as when buying a pound of sugar an apple is placed on top. (Steingass)

<sup>735</sup> As in barter.

explicit. So, if the words are not spoken between (the parties of the transaction)—in addition to the giving and receiving—as has now become the custom, it is not lawful. It is preferred that in the sale of trifles we call this a sale—for the sake of leniency—for this has become usual and the (position of the) school of Abu Hanifah (R) is thus.

Some of the companions of Shafi'i (R) also called this an educated agreement<sup>736</sup> in the Shafi'ite school. They have issued a decree about this. It is not improbable (that this was) for three reasons:

First: The need for it had become general.

Second: It is supposed that during the time of the Companions this was also the custom. If the requirement for the utterance of "sale" had been customary, it would have been a difficulty for them. It would have been related and not remained concealed.

Third: It is not impossible that an act<sup>737</sup> may replace the word (of agreement)—as when it becomes the custom—as is apparent in gifts. There was no pressure for a requital or concession for those (gifts) which were brought to the Prophet and the Companions. This is the way it has been in all eras and when property is obtained without a verbal utterance where there is no requital, according to the rule of custom, and by act only. It is not impossible even where there is a requital. Moreover, with respect to a gift, customarily, there is no difference between a little and a lot. However, in the case of the sale of something valuable, such as a house, real estate, a slave, a horse, or expensive clothing, it has been the custom to sell with a verbal utterance. If the sale is not declared by word in the case of such items, it is not in accordance with the custom of the forefathers and the property is not transferred.

As for bread, meat, fruit, and the small amounts of things which one purchases, there is reason to relax the rule on the grounds of custom and need. There are degrees between trifles and valuables to know, such as which is a counted a trifle and which is not. It is not possible to apportion these, as it is difficult. One should observe the way of caution.

Know that if, for example, some one buys a donkey-load of wheat without uttering the "sale," this is not regarded as a trivial thing and without the formal sale, it does not become his property. However, eating it and making use of it is not forbidden. Because of its transfer, acceptance is obtained, even though ownership is not obtained. If someone invites a guest and gives him to eat of it, it is also lawful, for the delivery by the owner is evidence in the context of the situation, that he has made it lawful to (the purchaser), but on the condition of compensation. If he were to say plainly: "Give this food of mine to thy guest and then give (me) the compensation later," it would be lawful and

<sup>736</sup> "educed" (*mukharraj*): that is, educated or extracted from the Traditions of the Prophet.

<sup>737</sup> "act": such as a nod of agreement or a gesture with the hands.

the compensation would be obligatory. Since the act was proved by this, that was the result. Not performing the (formal) sale affects (the goods) in that they do not become (the buyer's) property, so that if he wishes to sell them to someone else, he cannot. And should the owner wish to reclaim them, before they are eaten, he may—just as the food is placed on the eating cloth before the guest!

Know that a sale is valid with the condition that there be no other conditions. If one says: "I buy the firewood on condition that thou deliver it to my house," or "I buy this wheat on condition that thou grind it into flour," or with some other condition, the sale is voided except under six conditions: one, he sells it with the condition that something is given to him as security; or he takes an oath; or so-and-so gives a surety; or the price will paid later and not demanded until a specified time; or both (buyer and seller) have the right to cancel the sale for three days or less—more than that is not lawful; or he sells a male slave with the condition that he be a secretary or have knowledge of some craft. These conditions do not nullify the sale.

THE SECOND CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS PROFIT, and profit comes in precious metals and in victuals. As for the sale of precious metals, two things are forbidden:

One is that selling on credit is not lawful; gold must be sold for gold, or silver for silver. So long as both are not present before the separation of one from the other, possession is not to be taken of them. Also, if they are not received in public, the sale is invalid.

The other is that when something is being sold for something of its own kind, an increase is forbidden. It is not right to sell a sound dinar for a dinar and a grain of filings; nor is it right that a sound dinar be sold at a higher price for a dinar that is adulterated. Rather, bad, good, broken, and sound are equal to each other (of the same quality). Therefore, if one purchases a garment<sup>738</sup> for a sound dinar and then sells that garment (back) to that person for a dinar and a grain of filings, (the transaction) is valid and the desired end is achieved. It is not right to sell gold in which silver has been mixed for pure gold or for pure silver, or for minted coins.<sup>739</sup> Rather, something (else) must be staked. The same is true for every golden vessel the gold of which is not pure. It is not right to sell for gold a pearl necklace in which there is gold. Cloth embroidered with gold thread should not be sold for gold, unless it be in the amount that if placed in fire nothing of (the gold) would be retrieved, which would be the object.

<sup>738</sup> Or cloth. The word *jāmah* can mean both.

<sup>739</sup> Literally, coins struck in Herat (*zar-i hirāwīyah*), which were generally accepted as legal tender in that period.

As for comestibles, it is not proper to sell them for comestibles on credit—even if they are of different kinds. Rather, both must be received in public. If they are of the same kind, such as wheat for wheat, (the sale on) credit is still not right; neither is it (right) for an increase (in amount). Rather, they must both be of the same measure. If they are equal in weight, it is not lawful.<sup>740</sup> Rather, equality must be observed in everything, for that is the prevailing custom.

Nor is it proper to sell a sheep to a butcher (in return) for meat, wheat to a baker for bread, or sesame and shelled walnuts to an oil-presser for oil. All of these are incorrect and the sales are not valid. But if there is no transaction of sale, and one gives (one) to receive (the other), its consumption is lawful for him, though it is not his property and he cannot sell it. It is lawful for the baker to take possession of the wheat, but not to sell it (to another). For the purchaser, the wheat is the baker's. For the baker, the bread is the purchaser's. (But) one may claim it (from the other) whenever one wishes. Even if they have agreed to make it lawful<sup>741</sup> for each other, this is not sufficient. For, if one should say: "I made this lawful for thee with the condition that thou make it lawful for me;" one (condition) would nullify the other.

If this condition is not plainly stated, but one says: "I make it lawful," since he knows that the other party in the transaction has this condition in his mind and would not give him a *mann* of wheat without it, the legitimization would not result—in the Hereafter—between him and God Most High, for this agreement is with the tongue, not with the heart. Any agreement that is not with the heart is not valid in the Hereafter. However, if he should say: "I have made this lawful for thee, whether thou makest it lawful for me or not," and have the same thought in his mind that he articulates, it is valid. Then, if the other does the same thing too, it will likewise (be lawful). If they each do not legitimize the transaction, and if the value and quantity of both are equal, they are relieved of this litigation in this world and there will be no retribution in the next. However, if there is a difference (between the goods exchanged in value or quantity), then litigation in this world and punishment in the next world are to be feared.

And know that it is not proper to sell whatever is made from foodstuffs for that food, even if they are equal. It is not right to sell whatever comes from wheat, such as flour, for wheat. It is not right to sell grapes for vinegar and honey, nor to sell milk for cheese, nor

<sup>740</sup> That is, the sale must be made by volume, not by weight.

<sup>741</sup> "make it lawful" (*bi-hill*): This is a quittance of claim upon something. Saying "I make this lawful for you," means that one has surrendered one's rights and claims. Debts and obligations may be informally canceled with this phrase. *Bi-hill kardan* is the act of saying: "I have made this lawful (*halāl*)."*Bi-hill kardan* may be replaced with the abstract noun *bi-hilli*.

strained curds for clarified butter. Selling grapes for grapes, or fresh dates for fresh dates on a par is not correct until they become raisins or (mature) dates. There are many lengthy details in these matters, but that much which we have said is necessary to learn so that if something should occur that one does not know, he knows that he does not know it and he must enquire about it. For, if one does not know this much which we have stated, he would know that he must ask about it and be cautious so as not to fall into the forbidden without excuse. The quest for knowledge is a religious obligation as is acting upon that knowledge.

### THE THIRD CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS FORWARD BUYING.<sup>742</sup>

There are ten conditions in this that must be observed:

*THE FIRST CONDITION* is that at the time of making the contract one say: "This silver, gold, cloth, or whatever it may be, I give for the forward purchase of a donkey-load of wheat—for example—and the description of the wheat is thus and thus." Every quality that might possibly alter the value, be desired, or not customarily tolerated should all be stated so that it is plain. The other says: "I accept it." If he says: "I have bought something of this description from thee," instead of articulating the words "forward buying," it is also lawful.

*THE SECOND CONDITION* is that whatever is given not be given in excess; rather, one should make the weight and amount known so that if there is a need to return it, one may know that it is as it was given.

*THE THIRD CONDITION* is that the capital<sup>743</sup> should be turned over during the meeting for making the contract.

*THE FOURTH CONDITION* is that it be something bought forward be made known by a description of its condition, such as grain, cotton, wool, silk, and animal meat. As for whatever is compounded of whatever kind of thing so that the quantity of each ingredient is not known, such as perfume; or is combined from whatever things, such as a Turkish bow; or is manufactured, such as shoes, stockings, sandals, and cut arrows; the forward purchase of such things is invalid, for they do not accept description. It is correct that the forward buying of bread is lawful, even though it is compounded with salt and water, but the amount of each is not the point and does not cause ignorance (of the true condition).

*THE FIFTH CONDITION* is that if it be bought on time, that time must be specified. One should not say: "Until the grain crops ripen," for that is variable. If one says: "Until New Year's Day"<sup>744</sup> or "the second of

<sup>742</sup> "forward buying": *salam*.

<sup>743</sup> "capital" (*ra's-i māl*): that is, the payment agreed upon.

<sup>744</sup> The Iranian New Year (*Naw Rūz*), still celebrated in Iran and Afghanistan, occurs at the vernal equinox. Unlike the Islamic calendar which is lunar, the Iranian calendar is solar, so the New Year always occurs towards the end of the third week or the beginning of the fourth week of March.

the New Year," it would be specific. If one says: "until the month of Jumādā,"<sup>745</sup> it would be valid and it would be ascribed to the first month (of the two of that name).

*THE SIXTH CONDITION* is that the thing given for forward buying will be received at the appointed time. If fruit is sold forward until a time during which it has not ripened, it is not valid and void. If most of it be ripe, it is valid. If because of some misfortune it is late (in ripening), if one wishes, one may grant an extension, or one may cancel (the sale) and take back the payment.

*THE SEVENTH CONDITION* is that one should state how far (the goods) may be delivered, to a city or a village; for it is possible that a dispute arise leading to litigation.

*THE EIGHTH CONDITION* is that no source be specified. One should not say the grapes of this garden or the wheat of that field, for this thereby voids (the transaction).

*THE NINTH CONDITION* is that one should not give something for forward buying which is rare or unobtainable, such as large pearls the like of which are not found, or a beautiful slave girl with a child together, or such like.

*THE TENTH CONDITION* is that one should not offer for forward buying any foodstuff when foodstuffs are capital. One should not offer barley, wheat, millet, etc. for forward buying.

**THE FOURTH CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS RENTING AND HIRING.** It has two elements: the price and the use.

As for the makers of the contract and the utterance of the contract, it is the same as we have said with regard to sales.<sup>746</sup>

The remuneration must be made known, as we have said with respect to sales. If an edifice is hired out for repair, (the contract) is invalid because the repair is unspecified. If one says that he will pay ten dirhams for the repairs, it is still void, for the work required for the repair is unspecified. To hire a flayer for sheepskins or to hire a miller for an amount of bran or flour is invalid. It is not proper to make his wages anything that will be obtained from his labor as a hired person.

If one says: "I give thee this shop for a dinar each month," it would be void because the length of the lease is not made known. One must say: "One year or two years," so that all will be clear.

As for the use, know that it is lawful to hire someone for any work which is lawful and is known, and that causes pains (for the worker) and which causes him exertion. Therefore, there are five conditions in this that must be observed:

<sup>745</sup> Jumada I is the fifth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. See the calendar in the Translator's Preface.

<sup>746</sup> That is, the First Contractual Agreement discussed above.

*THE FIRST CONDITION* is that the job have an amount and a price, and require effort. If someone hires a cook to set a shop in order, or a tree on which to dry cloth, or an apple to smell, all of these are void, for they do not specify an amount. It is like the selling of a single grain of wheat.

If one is a broker with rank and pomp by whose single word a sale is completed and is hired with the condition that he speak once and complete a sale, the sale is invalid and the fee is unlawful, for there was no effort in this. Rather, the fee of broker or agent is lawful when there are negotiations and complications. Then, no more than the standard fee is necessary. However, to take 5% as has become the custom, and that on the amount of the property rather than the amount of the effort, is unlawful. Consequently, the property of brokers and agents so acquired is unlawful. The agent can escape this iniquity in two ways:

One is that he accept whatever is given to him and not haggle over (the fee), except over the amount of his pains, not the amount of the value of the goods.

The other is that he state beforehand: "When I sell this, I shall want a dirham," for example, or "a dinar," and the other party agrees (to this condition). He should not say: "I want 5% of the price," for that is unknown and the sale price (not yet) determined. If he says it that way, it is invalid and does not incur a liability other than the usual fee.

*THE SECOND CONDITION* is that the fee is necessary when there is a profit, and the capital is not counted. If one rents a garden of a vineyard to pick the fruit, or if one rents a cow as long as it gives milk, or makes a contract for half of a cow to take half of its milk, all of these are invalid, for both the fodder (for the cow) and amount of milk are unspecified. However, the hiring of a woman as a wet nurse is lawful because the purpose is the well-being of an infant, and the milk is assumed, just as the ink of the scribe or the thread of a tailor. This amount of assumption for a job is lawful.

*THE THIRD CONDITION* is that pay be given for work that is capable of being delivered and is lawful. If a feeble person is engaged for a job that he cannot do, it is void. If a menstruating woman is hired to sweep a mosque, it is invalid because this act is forbidden. If a person is hired to extract sound teeth, to cut off a healthy hand, or to pierce the ear of a child for earrings, (know that) all such transactions are invalid, and accepting payment for them is forbidden. So, too, is that which knaves draw upon their hands that are pierced with needles, and ink introduced (into the punctures).<sup>747</sup> The fees charged by the hat makers who embroider silk caps for men, the fees of tailors who make cloaks of rich

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<sup>747</sup> That is, tattooing.

undulated silk and silken gowns of brocade and silk for men are unlawful and paying for these is invalid.

In the same way, if someone hires a person to teach him ropedancing, it is unlawful. Whoever stands watching him is a partner in his peril (of punishment), for if people did not watch him, he would not be performing that. Whoever gives something to a ropedancer, a gamester, or a knife-thrower—occupations that are dangerous and without benefit—is in rebellion (against God). In the same manner, the pay given to jesters, musicians, professional mourners, and satirizing poets is prohibited.

The fee of a judge for judgment and the fee of a witness for testimony are unlawful. However, if the judge writes the official record, then it is lawful for him to accept a fee for this labor, for he is not required to write it. However, this is under the condition that he does not prevent others from writing it. If he prevents (the others) and writes it by himself and then demands ten dinars or a dinar for a record which would take an hour to write, it is unlawful. However, if he does not prevent others and stipulates that he will not write it for less than ten dinars, it is lawful. If another writes the record and he signs it and asks for something for this, saying: "I was not required to sign this," it is unlawful, for the correct thing is that the amount set is for that which is necessary. So, if there is no labor involved (in the signing), that much labor is like a *sir*<sup>748</sup> of wheat, which is of little value. The value lies in that it is the handwriting of the judge. Taking fees for anything which comes from rank and rule is not proper.

However, the fee of the pleader to the judge is lawful with the condition that he not represent a person whom he knows to be guilty. Indeed, the pleader to a judge must be a truthful person who knows that (the client) is in the right, or not know that he is guilty, with the stipulation that he not lie or misrepresent and not aim to conceal the truth. Instead, he should repudiate that which is false. So, when the truth is plain, he should be quiet. However, the denial of something which, if he agreed to it would nullify some right, is lawful.

Moreover, (the fee for) taken from both sides by a mediator who mediates between two persons is not lawful, for he cannot do the work of both parties in a dispute. However, if he works for one party and labors hard, this has a value and his fee is lawful, on the condition that he not utter a lie—that is prohibited—nor misrepresent, nor conceal anything which is true (and relevant) from both parties. Nor should he falsely panic (them), so that by such means he may make a settlement when, if the truth of that matter were known, (one of the parties) would not settle. Usually, such methods do not produce settlement. Therefore, the fees

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<sup>748</sup> *sir*: a weight equal to 15 *mithqals*; about 75 grams.

taken for most mediation, which is not devoid of favoring, force, lies, and misrepresentation, is unlawful.

When the mediator knows that the truth favors one party, it is not lawful for him to persuade the party in the right by deception to settle for less than what is his just right. But if he knows that (one party) will be tyrannical, then it is permitted for him to use trickery to frighten him out of such a course of action.

Whoever is dominated by integrity knows that he will be called to account for every word uttered by his tongue: "Why did he say this? For what reason did he say this? Did he speak the truth or did he lie? What his purpose righteous in this or was it false?" It will not be possible for him to mediate (for himself), or that he plea or judge for himself.

However, for an advocate who intercedes with the great for a post to be given to some person, if he takes trouble, and accepts a fee for this, it is lawful, with the stipulations that the work he does involves some difficulty and he does not take (money) as a requital for his dignity or rank as compensation, and that what he says in this effort be lawful. If he speaks in aid of the unjust, or says something forbidden in arranging for a stipend, he is in rebellion (against God), and his fee is unlawful.

All of these rules regarding fees must be learned by the payer and the payee both, for in this there is rebellion (against God), the details of which are lengthy. However, this much generally suffices to settle problems and one should know that he must ask (about other points).

*THE FOURTH CONDITION* is that he was not obliged to do the work and (the work) could not be delegated. For, if a warrior of the faith is hired during a war in defense of the faith, it is not lawful since it becomes his obligation (to fight) when he is present in the ranks. For this reason<sup>749</sup> a fee for the judge and witnesses is not lawful. The payment (that someone makes) to someone who fasts on behalf of him or performs the obligatory formal prayers on his behalf is not lawful. But payment (to someone) for performing the Greater Pilgrimage is lawful for a person who is unable to do so. (Fees paid to) gravediggers, washers of the dead, and pallbearers are lawful, even though it is a religious obligation that can be performed by oneself or another on his behalf.<sup>750</sup>

As for the imam leading the recommended night formal prayers during the month of Ramadan and the muezzin, there is a difference of opinion. The correct view is that (payment to them) is not forbidden. It is for his effort—for they take time and he must be present in the mosque—not for the formal prayer or the summoning to formal prayer. Nevertheless, it is not devoid of disapproval and doubt.

<sup>749</sup> That is, for the reason that it cannot be delegated to another.

<sup>750</sup> "a religious obligation that can be performed by oneself or another on his behalf": *fard-i kifāyat*.

THE FIFTH CONDITION is that work be known. A beast of burden that is to be hired must be seen. The one who lets it must know how large the load will be, whether it will be ridden, and for how many days it will be driven, unless there is a well-known customary arrangement for those things that would suffice (to satisfy this condition). If someone rents a plot of land, he should say what he intends to plant there, for the harm done (to the soil) by millet is greater than that done by wheat, unless it is customarily known. In the same way, all leases should be based upon knowledge so that disputes not arise. Everything done in ignorance from which disputes arise is void.

THE FIFTH CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS A LIMITED PARTNERSHIP.<sup>751</sup> It has three elements:

*THE FIRST ELEMENT* is capital. It should be cash—gold or silver—but caraway seed, cloth, and cottonseed (for oil) are not suitable. The weight should be made known and it must be handed over to the working partner.<sup>752</sup> If the owner (of the capital) should stipulate that he will put it in (the other's) hand (later), it is not correct.

*THE SECOND ELEMENT* is profit. That which will revert to the working partner must be stated plainly, as “half,” or “a third.” If one says: “Ten dirhams for thee—or for me—we shall divide the rest,” it is invalid.

*THE THIRD ELEMENT* is the work. It is required that the work be trade, and that that be buying and selling, not a craft. It is not lawful to give a baker wheat so that he bake bread and then split the profit. If cottonseed is given to an oil-presser, the same is true. If in the trading, there is a condition that one sell nothing but to such-and-such a person, or buy nothing but from such-and-such a person, it is invalid. Whatever condition restricts trade is invalid.

The contract (of limited partnership) is that which states: “I give this wealth to thee so that thou may trade with it and divide the profit in two equal parts.” The other says: “I accept.” When the contractual agreement is concluded, the working partner is the agent of the other in buying and selling. It is lawful for him to cancel the contract at any time. When the investor cancels (the agreement), if the property is in cash and there is a profit, they divide (the profit).

If the capital is in kind and there is no profit, it is given to the investor and it is not incumbent upon the working partner to sell it. If the

<sup>751</sup> Limited partnership (*qirād*): a partnership wherein one partner supplies the capital and the other the labor. The second takes half of the profits for his labor. The French *commandite*. In Islamic Law (*fiqh*), this is also called *mudārabah* and *muqāradah*.

<sup>752</sup> “working partner” (*‘āmil*): or “agent.”

working partner says: "I shall sell it," it is lawful for the investor to forbid that unless a customer has been found who will buy it at a profit. In that case, he cannot stop the working partner from selling it. When the wealth is in kind and there is a profit, the working partner must sell (that much of) it (to raise the amount of) cash that had been the working capital, not for more. When the value of the working capital has been raised in cash, the rest (of the goods) are divided (between the partners) and it is not incumbent upon the (the working partner) to sell them.

After a year (of the agreement) has passed, it is necessary to assess the value of the wealth for (paying) the obligatory poor-rate. The working partner must pay his own portion of the obligatory poor-rate.

It is not fitting that (the working partner) make a journey (for trading) without the permission of the investor. If he does, it is in the surety of property. But, if he makes a journey at the behest of the investor, the expenses of his travels are borne by the partnership, just as measuring, weighing, portage and rent of the shop are borne by the capital. Upon return, whatever he bought out of the capital, such as a dining cloths or ewers, becomes part of that capital.

**THE SIXTH CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT IS A PARTNERSHIP.** When property is held jointly, a partnership exists when permission is given to each other to control it. Then the profits are divided into two halves—if the capital of the two is equal. If it is unequal, then the profit will be (divided) proportionately, with the stipulation that it will not be permitted to alter (this division), except when the work is done by one. Then, it will be permissible for him to stipulate more for reason of the work. In this, the limited partnership and partnership are alike. However, there are three other kinds of customary partnership that are invalid:

One is the partnership of porters and craftsmen who stipulate that whatever they earn will be held jointly. This is invalid, for the earnings of each individual is purely his property.

Another is called the reciprocal partnership in which everything one has is put forward and it is said: "Whatever profit or loss there is belongs to all." This too is invalid.

Another is that one has the capital, another the rank. The property is sold on the word of the possessor of rank and the profits shared between them. This, too, is invalid.

Learning this much about the subject of transactions is necessary, for its need is general. What has not been covered here is unusual. If this much is known, whoever has a problem may ask. If one does not know this much, he may fall into the forbidden and not be forgiven.

### PART THREE: CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF EQUITY AND JUSTICE IN TRANSACTIONS

Know that that which we have said above concerns the correctness of transactions according to the letter of Religious Law. There are many transactions for which we issue judicial opinions that are (legally) correct, but for which that person (the successful litigant) is under the curse of God. These are transactions in the sorrow and harm of Muslims. There are two kinds of these: one is public; the other is private.

**AS FOR THE PUBLIC AFFLICTIONS,** they are two:

*THE FIRST* is hoarding. The hoarder is accused (by God). A hoarder is one who buys foodstuffs<sup>753</sup> and stores them so that they will become expensive. Then, he sells them. The Prophet (S) said: "It is not sufficient atonement for whoever holds food for forty days so that it will become expensive to then give all of it to charity,"

And the Messenger (S) said: "Whoever retains foodstuffs for forty days with the intention of causing the price to rise, God Most High is displeased with him, and he is displeased with God Most High." And the Messenger (S) said: "For whoever buys foodstuffs and then takes them and sells them a month later at the current price, it is as though he gives them to charity." In another Tradition, it is related: "It is as though he had set a slave free."

'Ali (R) used to say: "The soul of him who stores foodstuffs for forty days is black." When he was informed that food was being hoarded, he ordered that the food be set afire.

Some of the forefathers sent some food from Basrah to Wasit to sell by means of an agent. When (the agent) arrived (at Wasit), he found that prices were very low. He waited a week with the intention of selling it after that. He wrote (to the owners in Basrah), informing them of what he had done. They replied: "We would have been content with a little profit and soundness of faith. Thou shouldst not have exchanged our faith for a large profit. What thou hast done is a great crime. Thou must donate all of it to charity as atonement for what thou hast done. Perhaps even with this action we shall not have delivered ourselves completely from this misfortune."

Know that the reason for this prohibition is the harm it does to the public, for food is the mainstay of mankind. When it is sold, it is allowed for all people to buy, but when one person buys it and then locks it up, no one can get hold of it. It is as though lawful water belonging to

<sup>753</sup> Foodstuffs (*qūt*): This passage refers to the basic food of the people. In this case, grain, principally wheat, is meant. In areas where the basic cereal is rice, it would be rice.

no one is blocked in order to make the people thirst and then purchase it at great cost.

The sin lies in buying foodstuffs with such an intention. However, the villager who has grain and foodstuffs, his own property belonging to himself, may sell it at any time he wishes. He is not obliged to sell early, but it is better if he does not delay (too much). If in his heart he has a desire to sell dear, such a desire is reprehensible.

Know that with regard to the hoarding of medicines and things other than foodstuffs and not part of the basic needs of the public, it is not prohibited, but as to regard to foodstuffs, it is prohibited. However, there is a difference of opinion (among legal scholars) about things close to (basic) foodstuffs, such as meat, ghee, and the like. The correct view is that (hoarding such things) is not devoid of repugnance, but they are not in the class of (basic) foodstuffs. It is also forbidden to withhold foodstuffs when food is scarce. However, when anyone can buy as much as he desires, then it is not forbidden, as there is no necessity. Some are of the opinion that this too is forbidden at such a time. The correct view is that it is repugnant; for, in short, it is the expectation of rising prices, and waiting for the misery of the people, which is reprehensible. The forefathers held two kinds of trade to be repugnant: one the selling of food, the other the selling of shrouds—for the latter is in the expectancy of the death of persons and the sorrow of people, which is reprehensible. They also considered two professions reprehensible: butchering, for it makes the heart hard, and goldsmithery, which adorns the world.

*THE SECOND KIND* of public affliction is giving bad money in transactions, for if the person who accepts it does not know that (the giver) has oppressed him. If he knows it, it may be that he will deceive another, and then that person still another, and it will circulate for a long time from hand to hand. All of its injustice will redound to him. For this reason one of the great ones has said: "Giving one bad dirham is worse than stealing a hundred dirhams." He said that because the sin of stealing is over at once, but this is something that may continue after the death (of the giver of false coin). His misfortune is that he dies, but his sin does not die. It may continue for a hundred years or two hundred, and he shall suffer the torment of that in the grave, even though its origin has passed out of his hands.

Now, five things must be known with respect to adulterated gold and silver:

*FIRST:* When a false coin comes to hand, one must throw it into a well. It is not right to give it to another and say that it is bad money, for it may be that that person deceive another with it.

*SECOND:* It is obligatory for a merchant to master the knowledge of cash so that he may recognize that which is bad, not so that he not accept it; rather, so that he not pass it on to another by mistake and cause

a (fellow) Muslim loss. Whoever does not acquire this knowledge, should he circulate a bad coin by mistake, is in rebellion (against God), since the quest for knowledge regarding every transaction by which a person may be afflicted is obligatory.

**THIRD:** If one accepts it with the intention declared by the Messenger (S): "*God forgive the affair (of him) who makes the business of buying and selling easy,*" it is good, but (only) with the intention to throw it into a well. However, if the idea is to spend it, it is not right, even if one says that it is counterfeit.

**FOURTH (AND FIFTH):** False coin is that in which there is no gold or silver. It is not necessary to throw (those coins) in which there is gold and silver, but in a deficient (amount), into a well. But if it is spent, two things are necessary. One is that one should say (that the coin is clipped) and not conceal it. The other is that it be given to a person in whose integrity one has the confidence that he, too, will not deceive another. So, if one knows that he considers spending it lawful and not does not say anything, it is as though he knowingly sells grapes to someone to make wine, or he sells a weapon to someone he knows intends to be highwayman. These are forbidden. Because of the difficulty of security in transaction, the forefathers have said: "A trustworthy merchant is superior to a devotee."

**THE SECOND KIND IS PRIVATE INJUSTICE** that does not touch anyone save a party to the transaction. Any transaction which causes injury is oppression and forbidden.

In summary, it is not lawful for anyone to do anything to believer that which he does not consider lawful when done to himself. The faith of whoever approves of something for the believers that he does not approve of for himself is incomplete. The details of this are four things:

**FIRST:** That one not praise merchandise more extravagantly than it deserves, for this is also a lie, a misrepresentation, and an injustice. Also, one should not praise it justly, for the buyer knows it without his saying. This is useless. *He utters no word but there is with him an observer ready.* (Q. 50:18) Of everything that one says, they will ask: "Why didst thou say that?" If thou hast spoken nonsense, there will be no excuse.

As for swearing oaths, if it is a lie, it is a great sin. If it is true and the name of God Most High has been invoked for a mean task, it is an affront to the dignity (of God). In the Traditions, it is related: "Woe unto the merchants for (their) 'No, by God's' and (their) 'Yes, by God's,' and woe unto the craftsmen for their 'tomorrow's' and 'the day after tomorrow's.'" And it is related in The Traditions: "God Most High will

not look at the person on the Day of Resurrection who distributes his own goods with oaths.” There is a story about Yunus bin ‘Ubayd<sup>754</sup> (R), that he used to sell silken stuff. One day he opened his basket to a customer. His apprentice said: “O God! Grant me heavenly robes.” (Yunus) threw the basket down and refused to sell the silk. He feared that this was (excessive) praise of his goods.

*THE SECOND DUTY* in selling is that one should not conceal any defect in the goods from the customer. Everything should be told to him truthfully and completely. If one conceals something, he has committed fraud and has abandoned righteousness. He is an oppressor and a rebel (against God). Whenever he displays the best side of the cloth or shows it in a dimly lighted place so that it will appear better (than it is), or displays the better of a pair of shoes or stockings, he is a tyrant and a scoundrel. One day, the Messenger (S) was passing by a man selling wheat. He thrust his hand into the wheat. Inside it was damp. He asked: “What is this?” The man replied: “Water got into it.” (The Prophet) said: “Why hast thou not gotten the water out of it? *Whoever deceives us is not one of us.*”

A man sold a camel that had a lame leg for three hundred dirhams, unaware that Wathilah bin Asqa<sup>c</sup>,<sup>755</sup> one of the Companions, was standing there, inattentive. When he realized (what had happened), he went after the buyer and told him that the camel had a lame leg. The buyer went to the seller and took one hundred dirhams back from him. The seller said (to Wathilah): “Why didst thou spoil my sale?” He replied: “Because I heard the Prophet say: “It is not lawful for someone to sell something and conceal a defect. It is also not lawful for another who knows not to speak.”” And he said: “The Messenger (S) has accepted our obedience to counsel the Muslims and to observe kindness. Concealment does not come from wise counsel.”

Know that conducting business transactions in such a way is difficult. It is one of the great earnest strivings, but it is facilitated by two things:

*ONE* is that one should not buy defective goods. (About) what one buys (of defective goods), (the purchaser) should say to himself that if he has been defrauded, he knows that the loss is his and it does not fall upon someone else. If he himself curses the person who defrauded him, (at least) he does not fall under the curse of another. The fact of it is that he knows that one’s portion in life is not increased by fraud; rather, the

<sup>754</sup> Yunus bin ‘Ubayd: a contemporary of Sufyan Thawri (see Note 397) mentioned by Ibn Khallikan.

<sup>755</sup> Wáthilah bin Asqa<sup>c</sup>: A Companion of the Prophet and one of the People of the Bench (*ahl-i suffah*) who lived in his mosque. See Note 1706.

blessing of wealth departs and there is no enjoyment.<sup>756</sup> Whatever bits and pieces he obtains through purse-cutting will cause him loss suddenly when misfortune falls upon him, but the injustice will remain. It will be like the man who was in the habit of mixing water with the milk. His flocks of sheep were taken by a boy to the mountain (to graze). Suddenly a flood struck and carried the sheep away. The boy said: "It was the various amounts of water that we had mixed in the milk collected in a flood that bore the sheep away."

The Messenger (S) says: "When treachery enters transactions, blessedness departs." The meaning of "blessedness" is that a person possess a little wealth which gives him good fortune. Many people are made comfortable by that (wealth) and much goodness is brought about by it. And there is the person who possesses much wealth and whose great wealth is the cause of his ruin in this world and the next; it has no blessedness. Therefore, one must seek blessedness, not increase. And blessedness lies in trustworthiness. For, all (people) desire to do business with whoever is known for his honesty. His profit is much. Should he become known for fraud, all would guard against him.

*THE OTHER* is that one know that the length of one's life will not be more than a hundred years, but the Hereafter is forever. How could he, in these few days, consider it right to imperil his own eternal life for the sake of amassing silver? In his soul, he must reconsider these things so that imposture and treachery not seem sweet to him. The Messenger (S) says: "People are in the protection of *there is no god but God* from the wrath of God Most High until they give precedence to the world over religion. Then, whenever they pronounce those words, God Most High says: "In these words thou art speaking a lie and are not truthful."

As selling not to deceive is a religious obligation, so this is a religious obligation in all occupations. Adulterating is forbidden, unless it is not concealed. Ahmad Hanbal (R) was asked about mending (woven goods). He said: "It is proper if is done for wearing, not for selling. Whoever mends to misrepresent is in rebellion (against God) and his earnings are unlawful."

*THE THIRD DUTY* is that there be no fraud in the quantity and weight, and that the measure be correct. God Most High says: *Woe unto the defrauders!* (Q. 83:1) Woe to those who, when they receive, weigh high and, when they sell, weigh low. It was the custom of the forefathers that when they received, they would accept half a grain less and when they gave, they would give half a grain more. They would say: "The half-grain is a veil between us and hell," for they feared they could not measure accurately. And they would say: "The person is a fool who

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<sup>756</sup> "enjoyment" (*barkhwurdārī*): or "felicity, reputation, good fortune."

would sell Paradise, with a breadth many times greater than the seven heavens and earth, for half a grain! The person is a fool who would exchange excellence for woe for half a grain!" Whenever the Messenger (S) bought anything, he would say: "Weight the price and weigh more than is due."<sup>757</sup>

Fudayl 'Iyad saw his son weighing dinars to give to some person. He was cleaning the dirt off the coins (before weighing them). Fudayl said: "O son, that is better for thee than two Greater and Lesser Pilgrimages."

Our forefathers used to say: "The owner of two sets of scales, one for giving, the other for receiving, is worse than all (other) sinners. Each dealer in cloth who, when buying or measuring, is lax and, when selling, is tight<sup>758</sup> is one of them. Any butcher who weighs the bone with the meat where it is not the custom is one of them. Whoever sells grain mixed with dirt—more than is usual—is one of them. All of this is forbidden. Instead, integrity is required in all works and dealings with people, for whoever says something which, if he were to hear the like spoken about himself, would hear it with displeasure, has made a distinction between giving and receiving. He escapes this (sin) by not holding back anything for himself from his brother in any dealing; but this characteristic is difficult. It is with regard to this that God Most High said: *And there is not one of you but shall come to it.* (Q. 19:71) There is no one who will not be forced to pass by hell, but the nearer a person is to the way of piety, the more quickly he will obtain delivery (from it).

**THE FOURTH DUTY** is that one not make any misrepresentation in the price of the goods or conceal anything, for the Messenger (S) has prohibited a person's going before a caravan and, concealing the market rate of the city, buying the goods (of the caravan) cheaply (before it has entered the city). The owner of the goods has the right to cancel the sale to anyone who does this. And the Messenger (S) forbade that a person say to a stranger who has brought goods to a city where the price is low (for those goods): "Leave (the goods) with me so that I may sell them at a higher price later."

And he prohibited the purchase of goods at a high price so that another person think that (the first) is telling the truth and (the second) buys them at a higher price. If someone arranges with the owner of the

<sup>757</sup> In olden times, coins made of precious metals were weighed to verify weight because such coins lost weight through handling and the reprehensible practice of "clipping" (shaving off bits of the precious metal).

<sup>758</sup> That is, manipulates measurements of cloth and specie to his advantage; under-measuring when purchasing from a supplier and doing the opposite when selling; giving false measurements during transactions; selling, for example, 10 yards of fabric while claiming that is 11 yards.

goods to deceive someone, when (the buyer) realizes (the deception), it is lawful for him to cancel the transaction. And it is customary that when the goods are auctioned off in the market place, someone who has no intention of buying the goods raises the price. This is unlawful. Nor is it permitted to buy goods from a simple-minded person who does not know their value and then sells them cheaply, or that a simple-minded person buy at too high a price. However much we may issue decisions that the sale is in appearance correct, but when the truth of the matter is concealed from him, it is criminal.

One of the Follower<sup>759</sup> was in Basrah. One of his bondmen wrote to him from Shush:<sup>760</sup> "The sugar crop has been affected by blight this year. Before anyone knows, buy a large amount of sugar." He bought a large amount of sugar and sold it at the right time. He made a profit of 30,000 dirhams. Then, he said to himself: "Thou hast defrauded the Muslims and concealed the blighting of the sugar crop. When has this become lawful?" He took up the 30,000 dirhams and went to the seller and said: "This is thine." The seller asked: "Why?" He told him the story. The seller said: "I declare it lawful<sup>761</sup> for thee." That night after returning to his house, he thought about the matter very carefully and said: "It may be that the man said that out of diffidence, yet I have (still) defrauded him." The next day he returned (to the seller) and said that to him and pleaded with him until he took back the 30,000 dirhams.

Know that whoever states his purchase price must speak the truth and not misrepresent it in any way. If a defect is found in the goods, he should tell the owner. If he has paid too much, but has overlooked this because of his friendship for the seller who has been his friend or relative, he should tell him. If he has given goods worth nine dinars in the exchange for ten dinars, it is not proper that he say he bought them for ten dinars. If he had bought them cheaply during that time, but later the price changed and was now nine dinars, he should state that. The details of this are lengthy and not suitable for inclusion in this book, for merchants practice many frauds without realizing that they are frauds. The fact is that if someone practiced the same trickery upon him, he would not regard it as lawful, so it is not right that he do it to another. He must make this his standard, for when someone buys something trusting the word of the seller as to what he paid for it, he buys it thinking that the thorough investigation of the matter is completed and that he is (now) paying what the item is worth. When there is an underlying deception, the buyer would not agree, and that is picking pockets.

<sup>759</sup> The Followers (*tābi‘in*): the generation that followed the Companions.

<sup>760</sup> Shush (*Shūsh*): the text has *Sūs*, an alternate version. The city was known to the ancient Greek world as Susa. It is located in the province of Khuzestan in southwestern Iran. To the present day, Khuzestan is the center for the growing of sugar cane in Iran.

<sup>761</sup> See Note 741 above.

**PART FOUR: CONCERNING BENEFICENCE AND  
GOOD DEEDS IN TRANSACTIONS**

Know that God Most High has commanded beneficence<sup>762</sup> just as He has commanded justice, for *Lo! God enjoins justice and beneficence.* (Q. 16:90) The previous section was devoted to a discussion of justice so that one may flee (doing) oppression. This section is about beneficence. God Most High says: *Verily the mercy of God is close to the beneficent.* (Q. 7:56) Whoever has confined himself to justice has held on to his capital in religion. However, the profit lies in beneficence. The intelligent one is that person who does not neglect the profit of the Hereafter in any transaction.

Beneficence is a good deed in which there is a benefit for the (other) transactor that is not obligatory upon thee. The degree of beneficence is attained in six ways:

THE FIRST WAY is that one should not consider it lawful to take excessive profit, even if the buyer is agreeable because of a need he has. Sari Saqati<sup>763</sup> used to have a shop and did not think it lawful to make a profit of more than 5%. One time he bought almonds for 60 dinars. Afterwards the price of almonds rose. An auctioneer came to buy the almonds. Sari said: "Sell them for 63 dinars." The other said: "Today the price is ninety dinars." Sari replied: "I have decided that I shall not sell them for a profit of more than 5%. It is not lawful (for me) to violate (my) resolution." (The auctioneer) said: "And I too do not consider it lawful to sell thy goods for less." So neither (the auctioneer) sold (the almonds), nor did Sari agree to excessive (profit). That is beneficence!

Muhammad (bin) al-Munkadir<sup>764</sup> was an important personage and had a shop in which there were garments, the price of some, five dinars and others, ten dinars. In his absence, his apprentice sold a five-dinar garment to a bedouin for ten dinars. When (Muhammad al-Munkadir) returned he learned this and spent the whole day searching for that bedouin. When he finally located him, he said: "That garment was not worth five dinars." The bedouin replied: "It may be that I am content." (Muhammad) said; "So be it, but I do not like anything for any Muslim that I do not like for myself. Come, and cancel the transaction, or

<sup>762</sup> "beneficence": *ihsān*.

<sup>763</sup> Sari Saqati: Al-Sari Abū al-Hasan al-Mughallis (or Mughallas) al-Saqatī (following HK's explicit vowelizing; others vowel it *Saqṭī*). From Baghdad, he was a prominent ascetic and theologian. He died about AH254/868CE, at the age of 98, according to report. (See the Fifth Station in the Sixth Chapter of the Fourth Pillar).

<sup>764</sup> Muhammad (bin) al-Munkadir: a man of learning quoted by the 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century ascetic Sufyan bin 'Uyaynah (see Note 990). Imam Abu Hanifah (see Note 400) also attended his lectures.

take five dinars from me, or come and I shall give thee a better garment.” The bedouin accepted the five dinars, then he asked someone: “Who is that man?” He was told that he was Muhammad bin al-Munkadir. He said: “Glory be to God! He is that very man at the mention of whose name, whenever there is a drought in the desert and we pray for rain, rain falls!”<sup>765</sup>

The forefathers were of habit of making a small profit in many transactions. They held this to be more blessed than waiting for a large profit. ‘Ali (R) used to walk about the market of Kufah, saying: “O people! Do not reject a small profit for ye will lose much.” And ‘Abd al-Rahman bin ‘Awf<sup>765</sup> was asked: “What is the cause of thy great wealth?” He replied: “I do not reject a small profit, and whoever wanted an animal from me, I did not refuse and sold it to him. In one day, I sold a thousand camels for what I had paid for them and did not make a profit exceeding two thousand knee hobbles.<sup>766</sup> Each one was worth a dinar and I no longer had to pay a dinar for the fodder (of each camel). So I made a profit of 2,000 dirhams!”

THE SECOND WAY is that one buys the goods of the poor—such as the yarn of old women and leftover fruit from the hands of poor children—at a higher price, so as to gladden them. This indulgence is better and more meritorious than voluntary charity. The supplication of the Messenger (S): “*May God bless the affair (of him) who facilitates buying and selling,*” touches him.

As for the rich, buying goods from them by gulling has neither recompense nor gratitude. It is a waste of goods. Instead, (with them) bargaining and buying at a low price is to be preferred.

Hasan and Husayn (R) used to try to buy everything at a lower price and would argue until it was said (to them): “Ye give away thousands of dirhams a day; why do ye bargain for this amount?” They would reply: “What we give, we give for the sake of God Most High, and lot in that is a little. However, accepting a loss is a loss of intelligence and wealth.”

<sup>765</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahman bin ‘Awf: ‘Abd al-Rahmān bin ‘Awf al-Zuhrī, an early convert to Islam and one of those who went to Ethiopia and later returned, fighting in many of the Muslim military expeditions. He was one of those appointed to choose the third caliph after the assassination of ‘Umar bin Khattab. He died in Madinah in AH32/652-3CE.

<sup>766</sup> “knee hobbles” (*zānū band*): the strap or rope by which one of the camel’s legs is bound to the thigh thus preventing it from straying. In Arabic, it is called *‘iqāl*, and Arab men customarily wind it around their heads when it is not in use on the camel. Today, it is worn by most Arabs of the Peninsula as a personal ornament, even if they do not have any camels. By selling the camels, ‘Abd al-Rahman received back the hobbles and no longer had to pay for their fodder. He considered that a profit.

THE THIRD WAY lies in three kinds of beneficence in receiving the price (of the goods): the first is some reduction, another is accepting broken coins and worse cash, and the third is granting time (for payment). The Messenger (S) says: "May God have mercy on the person who makes receiving and giving easier." And he says: "God Most High will make easy the affairs of him who is lenient."

There is no beneficence greater than giving a respite to a poor person. However, if he does not have anything, giving him time is a duty and is a part of justice. However, if he has something, but cannot sell it lest he sell at a loss, or he is in need of it, granting him time is a good deed and is one of the great (forms of) charity.

And the Messenger (S) said: "At the Resurrection a man will be brought forward who had oppressed himself in religion. No good deed was recorded in his ledger. He is asked: 'Hast thou never done any good deed?' He replies: 'No, I have not, except that I used to tell my apprentices to give time to whoever owes me (money) and is in straitened circumstances and to be lenient (with him).' God Most High says: 'So on this day that thou art in straitened circumstances and helpless, We prefer to be lenient with thee.' And He forgives him."

In the Traditions, it is related that: "Whoever gives a loan for a period of time, with each day that passes, it is a voluntary charity. When the (stated) period has elapsed, for every day that passes after that, it is as if he had given that sum as voluntary charity. Among the forefathers, there were persons who did not want to have their loans repaid, for they would be credited with voluntary charity to the amount of the sum each day.

The Messenger (S) said: "I saw it written on the gate of Paradise that a dirham of voluntary charity is worth ten dirhams, but the dirham of a loan is worth eighteen dirhams." That is because no one borrows except out of need, but it is possible that voluntary charity fall may not into the hand of a needy person.

THE FOURTH WAY is by repaying loans. The beneficence in this is that a request not be necessary and that one hurry and pay (the loan) out of better coin, and deliver it with one's own hand to the house of the lender, so that that person not be required to send someone to one. It is related in the Traditions: "The best of you is he who better pays his debts." And it is related in the Traditions: "Until the loan is repaid, God Most High appoints several angels to watch over and supplicate for whoever takes a loan and in his heart is determined to repay it with better."

However, if one is able to repay and delays an hour without the agreement of the lender, he is unjust and in rebellion (against God). Whether he is performing formal prayer, whether he is fasting, whether

he is sleep—in all of these he remains in the curse of God Most High. It is a sin that continues while he is asleep.

The condition of the ability (to repay) is not (just) that one have cash. Rather, when one has something to sell and does not, one is in rebellion (against God). If one repays with bad money or a substitute which the lender receives with dislike, then one is in rebellion. He will not escape (the onus of) this misdeed until he obtains the satisfaction of (the lender). This is counted among the great sins that easily ensnare people.

**THE FIFTH WAY** is that one cancels any transaction about which the other party has second thoughts. The Messenger (S) said: "God Most High considers the sins not done of whoever considers a sale not completed and not done." This is not an obligation, but its reward is great and it is a beneficence.

**THE SIXTH WAY** is to sell to the poor on credit, even if it is a small amount, with the intention of not calling for payment so long as they have no money. If they die in straitened circumstances, one should forgive the debt. Among the forefathers, there were those who kept two ledgers, one with false names for those who had no wealth and were poor. They did not record their names so that if they (the lenders) should die, no one would request repayment from (the poor debtors). But these (lenders) were not counted as among the best. Rather, the best were considered to be those who kept no ledger of the names of the poor (in any form). If they repaid (the loan), they accepted it; if not, they abandoned any desire for it.

The pious behaved thus in transactions. The quality of a religious man is apparent in his transactions. Whoever shuns a doubtful silver dirham for religious reasons is counted among the men of faith.

#### **PART FIVE: CONCERNING CONSIDERATION FOR RELIGION AMIDST THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE WORLD**

Know that that person whom the business of the world distracts from the business of religion is wretched. What is the state of a person who exchanges a golden jug for an earthen jug? The earthen jug represents the world, while the golden jug represents the Hereafter, which is both beautiful and enduring and shall never come to an end. The business of the world is not suitable for the provisions of the Hereafter. Rather, one must strive very hard to turn away from the way to hell. The capital of a human being is his religion and his Hereafter. Not having mercy on himself, all of his energies are engaged by commerce and husbandry, but he has this consideration for religion when he observes seven precautions:

THE FIRST PRECAUTION is that one renews his intentions in his heart every day. He goes to the market to obtain his food and that of his family so that he will not need to importune others and to be free from covetousness, to acquire enough strength and leisure to worship God Most High and to travel the road to the Hereafter. And he forms the intention to observe on this day compassion, counsel, and trust with people. And he forms the intention to enjoin what is good and prohibit what is reprehensible. He will reprove whoever acts treacherously and not absolve him.

If one forms these intentions, it is one of the works of Hereafter and a profit to religion. If one obtains anything from the world, it will be increased.

THE SECOND PRECAUTION is that one (should) know that he cannot live a day without the labor of at least a thousand other persons, such as the baker, the farmer, the weaver, the blacksmith, the cotton carder, and (the workers of) other trades—all working for him and for whom he has need. It is not right that others work for him, all benefiting him, and that no one benefit from him. For the whole world in this life is on a journey and the travelers must take each other by the hand so that they may aid one another. He must also form the intention: “I shall go to the market to work so that Muslims will find comfort from it, just as other Muslims are doing my work.” For all employments are among the transferable obligations.<sup>767</sup>

One also forms the intention that he has risen to perform one of these obligations. The sign of the correctness of this intention is that he works at a job that is needed by the people. If the job is not like that, it should not be harmful to the affairs of the people, such as goldsmithery, portraiture, plastering, sculpting; for all of these are for the decoration of the world and there is no necessity (for that). It is better not to do this, even though it may be lawful. As for embroidering and gold fabrics for men (to wear), these are in themselves unlawful.<sup>768</sup>

Among the employments that were disliked by the forefathers are selling foodstuffs, selling shrouds, butchering, money changing—it is difficult to observe the finer points of (avoiding) usury in it—cupping—for there is the cutting of a human being in which there may be benefit but there may be the opposite—night soil sweeping, and tanning—for it is difficult to cleanse clothing of their impurities and (the work) points to low aspirations. The same with respect to the herdsmen of beasts of

<sup>767</sup> “transferable obligations”: *furūd-i kifāyat*.

<sup>768</sup> Men are prohibited from wearing silk and gold.

burden, and brokerage—for one cannot avoid being talkative and garrulous.

In the Traditions, it is related that the best business is that of that haberdasher and the best craft is that of the cobbler who makes water bottles, vessels for purification, and the like (out of leather). In the Traditions, it is related that: "If there is any merchant in heaven, it will be a haberdasher; if there is one in hell, it will be the moneychanger." Four trades were considered weak: weaving, cotton selling, spindle-making, and teaching. The reason for this is that these people deal with women and children, and whoever mingles with weak intellects becomes weak of intellect himself.

THE THIRD PRECAUTION is that market of the world not keep one from the market of the Hereafter. The market of the Hereafter is the mosque. God Most High says: *Let not your wealth nor your children distract you from the remembrance of God.* (Q. 63:9) He says: "Be so that the business of trade does not prevent you from the remembrance of God Most High, for then ye will be the losers."<sup>769</sup>

'Umar (R) said to the merchants: "At the beginning of the day, ye forsake the Hereafter, and after that the world." The custom of the forefathers was that they considered morning and the evening for the Hereafter. Either they were in the mosques in remembrance of God Most High, or attending an informative assembly. Pottage and head-and-trotters stew, all of it, used to be sold by children and (non-Muslim) people of the Book because at those time the men were all in the mosques.

In the Traditions, it is related: "When the angels bear to heaven the record of the servant (of God) who has done a good deed at the beginning and end of the day, what he has done in between is forgiven." And in the Traditions it is related: "The angels of the night and the angels of the day gather together and God Most High asks: 'How did it go, My servants?' They reply: 'When we passed them they were all at formal prayer, when we arrived they were engaged in formal prayer.' God Most High says: 'I have accepted you as witnesses that I have forgiven them.'"

When one hears the summons to obligatory formal prayer at the midday, one must not hesitate. One should put down whatever work one is doing and go to the mosque. In the commentary on this verse—(*Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguiles from remembrance of God* ... (Q. 24:37)—it is said that they were a people whose blacksmith had raised his hammer. When the summons to obligatory formal prayer began, he did not strike. The water-bottle maker had thrust his needle

<sup>769</sup> Ghazzali's paraphrase.

(into the leather), but at the call to obligatory formal prayer, he did not draw it out.

THE FOURTH PRECAUTION is that one should not neglect the remembrance and glorification of God Most High in the market. As much as possible, the tongue and heart should not be idle (of this). One should know that one will not find a profit in all the world comparable to (the profit) from this. The spiritual reward for remembrance among the heedless is greater. The Messenger (S) said: "The rememberer of God among the heedless is like a green tree among dry trees, like the living among the dead, and like the combatant among those who flee." And the Messenger (S) said: "For whoever arrives at the market and says: '*There is no god but God, Alone, He has no partner; His is the sovereignty and His is the praise; He gives life and causes death; He is Living and Immortal; All goodness is in His hand and He is Omnipotent in all things,*' twice a thousand thousand good deeds are recorded for him."

One day Junayd (R) said: "There are many people in the market who, if they listened to the Sufis and stood in their place, would be of them." And he said: "We know a person whose private worship in the market every day is three hundred bows of formal prayer and three thousand glorifications." And it was said that he desired to do this for himself.

In summary, whoever goes to the market to earn his livelihood so that he may obtain the leisure for his religion is thus; he does not neglect the real objective. However, whoever repairs (to the market) for (an) increase of worldly goods is incapable of this. Instead, if he goes to the mosque to perform formal prayer, his mind is distracted and occupied with store accounts.

THE FIFTH PRECAUTION is that one not be so covetous about the market so that he is the first to enter and the last to leave. Making long, dangerous journeys, traveling by ship, and the like are signs of excessive greed.

Mu'adh Jabal (R) says: "Iblis has a son whose name is Zalanbür. He is his (father's) representative in the markets. (Iblis) says to him: 'Go the market and inspire their hearts with lies, oaths, deceit, treachery, and trickery. Accompany the first person to enter and the last to leave.'" It is related in the Traditions: "There are very bad places in the market and the worst of (the merchants) is the first to enter and the last to leave." Consequently, duty requires that one should not go to the market before attending edifying lectures, early morning private worship,

and the formal prayer of the mid-morning.<sup>770</sup> When one has made enough profit for the expenditures of the day, one should return and enter the mosque to procure the sufficiency of the next life, for that life is longer and its needs are greater. (A person) is more in need of the provisions for that.

Hammad bin Salamah<sup>771</sup> was the teacher of Abu Hanifah. He used to sell women's head scarves. When he had made two grains profit, he would pack up his scales and go home.

Ibrahim bin Yassar said to Ibrahim Adham: "Today I go to work with mud." (Ibrahim Adham) said: "O Bin Yassar, thou art always seeking and always sought. Thou dost not pass over that which always seeks thee, and that which thou seekest will not pass over thee. Hast thou never seen the greedy deprived or the indolent provided for?" (Ibrahim bin Yassar) replied: "I have nothing in my possession other than a sixth part of a bean crop." (Ibrahim Adham) said: "Alas for Islam! When thou possessest that, thou still goest to work in mud?"

There was a group among the forefathers who were thus: they did not go to the market more than two days in the week. Another group went every day and stood for the noon obligatory formal prayer; a group attended the afternoon obligatory formal prayer and each person earned his daily bread and went to the mosque.

THE SIXTH PRECAUTION is that one avoid the doubtful. Moreover, if he flirts with the unlawful, he is a sinner and a rebel (against God). He should seek religious judgment about that which is doubtful in his heart, not from jurisprudents—(unless the jurisprudent) is one of the spiritual, and this is rare. He should not purchase anything from which his heart finds loathing. He should not deal with the unjust and their adherents. He should not sell any goods to an unjust person on credit, for then he may be saddened by that person's death and be pleased with his wealth. It is not fitting to be sorrowful at the death of an oppressor or to delight in his wealth. He will be a partner in their oppression if whatever he knowingly sells to them aids in their tyranny. For example, if one sells paper to comptrollers and oppressors, he will be punished for that.

<sup>770</sup> Shops, except greengrocers and the like, are not usually opened until mid-morning (about 9:30 to 10:00 am). Ghazzali says the business men should perform the mid-morning formal prayer and then proceed to their places of business. The mid-morning formal prayer (*chāṣṭ*) is not obligatory.

<sup>771</sup> Hammad bin Salamah: Ḥammād bin Dīnār, Abū Salamah, was a conservative jurist. A pupil of Ibrahim Nakha'i (see Note 859), he was a mufti of Basrah in the 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century. He is credited with the invention of the terminology of legal categories (*asnāf*). He was succeeded by Imam Abu Hanifah (see Note 400). Hammad died AH166-7/783CE. (Fihrist)

In summary, one should not do business with just any person; rather, one should seek out experienced traders. It is said that there was once a time when whoever went to the market would say: "With whom shall I do business?" They would say: "With whomever thou wishest, for all take precautions." Then, there came a time when they answered: "Do not do business except with such-and-such persons." It is feared that a time will come when it will not be possible to do business with anyone.

That was said before our time. Behold! In our time it has become thus! They have erased the distinction and become audacious with that which they have heard from scholars deficient in knowledge and faith, that the wealth of world has become all the same and all of it is unlawful! This is a grievous error; it is not thus. The conditions of this will be related in *The Book of the Lawful and the Unlawful* after this,<sup>772</sup> if God Most High so wills.

THE SEVENTH PRECAUTION is that one should be scrupulous in speech, deed, and in lending or borrowing with every person with whom one deals. One should know that at the Resurrection, they will have him with all of (his customers) and they shall seek justice from him. One of the saints saw a merchant in his dreams. He asked him: "What has God Most High done with thee?" He answered: "He placed 50,000 documents before me. I said: 'Lord God, are all of these pages sins?' He replied: 'Thou hast transacted business with 50,000 persons. Each page is the record of one of them.'" (The merchant) said: "I saw that each one was my own record with (the customer), from the beginning to the end."

In summary, if one is responsible for a grain that (a customer) lost due to (the merchant's) misrepresentation, he will be seized for that loss and nothing will benefit him until he has got quit of that obligation.

This was the conduct of the forefathers in the way of Religious Law in business transactions. This practice has risen (and departed); the knowledge of transactions in this epoch has been forgotten. Whoever implements one of these practices earns great spiritual reward. It is related in the Traditions that the Messenger (S) said: "A time will come when, should a person observe one tenth of the precautions that ye do, it will be sufficient for him." He was asked: "Why?" He replied: "Because ye have a companion in good deeds. For that reason they are easy for you, but they will not have a companion and will be strangers among the heedless."

This was said so that if a person heard it he would not give up hope and would not say: "When could one do all of that?" For, as much as he is able to perform will be ample. Indeed, whoever has faith that the Hereafter is better than this world is able to do all of this, for nothing

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<sup>772</sup> That is, in the following chapter.

save poverty is produced by taking these precautions. But any poverty for the sake of the eternal kingdom may be endured. People endure much destitution, suffering, and contempt in order to obtain wealth or achieve power, all of which, should death come, will be lost. It is not so great a task, in exchange for the empire of the Hereafter, if a person not do to others that which he does not like done to himself.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RECOGNIZING THE LAWFUL, THE UNLAWFUL, AND THE DOUBTFUL<sup>73</sup>

The Messenger (S) said: “*Seeking the lawful is a religious obligation for every Muslim.*” But the lawful cannot be sought until one knows what the “lawful” is. And he said: “The lawful is plain and the unlawful is plain, between the two of them lie the doubtful things, difficult and obscure. There is a fear that whoever gravitates towards them will fall into the forbidden.

Know that this study is lengthy and we have discussed this in *The Revival* in a detail not to be found in any other book. In this volume, we shall discuss that amount which common understanding can tolerate. We explain that much in four parts: First, Concerning The Spiritual Reward And Virtue Of Seeking The Lawful; Second, Concerning The Degrees Of Pious Scrupulousness in the Lawful and Unlawful; Third, Concerning Enquiring About the Lawful and Not Asking About It; and Fourth, Concerning Royal Stipends and the Rules of Mixing With Them.

### PART ONE: CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL MERIT AND VIRTUE OF SEEKING THE LAWFUL

Know that God Most High says: *O ye Prophets! Eat of the good things, and do right.* (Q. 23:51) He says: “O Prophets eat of that which is clean and lawful and do that which befits obedience.” The Messenger (S) said concerning this: “Seeking the lawful is incumbent upon all Muslims.” And he said: “God Most High floods with light the soul of whoever eats of the lawful for forty days, without the admixture of anything unlawful, and opens the eyes of wisdom in his soul.” One (version of the) Tradition has it that: “It cuts off the love of the world from his soul.”

Sa‘d<sup>74</sup> was one of greatest of the Companions. He said: “O Prophet of God, teach (me) a supplication that will cause my supplications to be answered (by God).” (The Prophet) replied: “Eat of the lawful so that thine every supplication may be answered.” And the Messenger (S) said: “There is many a person whose food, nourishment, and clothing are unlawful. Then, he raises his hands and offers supplications! When would such a supplication be answered?” And he

<sup>73</sup> “lawful”: *halāl*; “unlawful”: *harām*; “doubtful”: *shubhat*.

<sup>74</sup> Sa‘d: Sa‘d bin Abi Waqqāṣ, Abū Ishaq. He became a convert to Islam at the age of 17 and was of the Prophets oldest Companions. He was one of those who had been promised Paradise. He was a formidable general. He led the Arab forces at the battle of Qadisiyah and conquered Iraq. He died in either AH50/670CE or AH55/674CE and is buried at Madinah.

said: "God Most High has an angel in the Sacred House.<sup>775</sup> Every night he cries out: "God Most High will accept neither the performance of the obligatory nor the following of the Practice of the Prophet from him who eats of the unlawful." And (the Messenger) said: "Whoever buys a garment with 10 dinars, one dinar of which was (acquired) unlawfully—so long as that garment is on his body, none of his obligatory prayers will be accepted (by God)." And he said: "It is better that whatever flesh has grown from the unlawful be burned."

And he said: "(As for) him who cares not about the source of the property he obtains, God Most High cares not about where He throws him in hell." And he said: "Worship has ten parts; nine of those are the seeking of the lawful." And he said: "Whoever returns home at night tired from seeking the lawful, sleeps forgiven. He rises in the morning with God Most High pleased with him." And he said: "God Most High says: 'The persons who abstain from the forbidden are ashamed that I may call them to account.'" And he said: "One dirham taken in usury is harder than that which thirty acts of adultery do to (one's) being a Muslim." And he said: "Voluntary charity will not be accepted from whoever earns his livelihood from the forbidden. If he gives it, it will be his provision on the way to hell."

Abu Bakr (R) took a single gulp of milk from the hand of a male slave. Then, he realized that it was not from a good way.<sup>776</sup> He thrust his finger down his throat so that he could vomit it up. It was feared that he might die from the sorrow and suffering of this. Then he said: "Lord God! I seek refuge with Thee from that which remains in my veins." 'Umar (R) did the same thing when he was mistakenly given milk donated as a voluntary charity and drank it.<sup>777</sup>

'Abdullah (bin) 'Umar (R) says: "Shouldst thou perform so many formal prayers that thy back develops a hump, shouldst thou fast so much that thou becomest as thin as a hair, it would be to no avail and not accepted (by God), except with the abstention from the unlawful."

Sufyan Thawri says: "Whoever gives voluntary charity from an unlawful source and does good works will be like the person who washes the filth of a garment away with feces." Yahya Mu'adh<sup>778</sup> said: "Obedience is the treasury of God Most High. Its key is supplication, and

<sup>775</sup> The Sacred House (*Bayt al-Muqaddas*): An epithet for Jerusalem, referring to the Temple.

<sup>776</sup> That is, that the milk was not his to drink.

<sup>777</sup> That is, 'Umar did not possess the qualifications to receive charity. He was not poor or destitute.

<sup>778</sup> Yahya Mu'adh: Yaḥyā bin Mu'adh al-Rāzī, Abū Zakariyā, he was from Balkh in northern Afghanistan and, having spent some time in Baghdad, he died at Naysabur (Nishapur in modern Iran) in AH206/821-2CE. He was a well-known teacher and ascetic.

the notches (of the key) are the lawful." Sahl Tustari<sup>779</sup> says: "No one achieves the truth of faith except with four things: performance of all religious obligations with their conditions and the Practice of the Prophet; eating of the lawful in accordance with the Religious Law and self-restraint; abandoning all improper things in appearance and essence; and being patient with this until death."

And it has been said: "The soul of whoever eats the doubtful for forty days becomes dark and tarnished." 'Abdullah Mubarak says: "I prefer returning one doubtful dirham to its owner over giving a hundred thousand in voluntary charity." Sahl Tustari says: "Whether one wishes it or not, if a person eats of the unlawful, his entire body falls into sin. The body of whoever eats of the lawful, whether he wishes it or not, is in obedience and the good fortune stays close to him."

There are many Traditions and non-Prophetic traditions about this that have come down to us. The reason was that the pious took great precautions. One of them was Wuhayb bin al-Ward,<sup>780</sup> who never ate anything until he knew its source. One day, his mother gave him a cup of (sheep's) milk. He asked: "Where didst thou get this from? Where didst thou get the money to buy it? From whom didst thou buy it?" When she had answered these questions, he asked: "Where did the ewe graze?" The animal had grazed in a place where other Muslims had rights, so he did not drink it. His mother said: "Drink, for God Most High will have mercy upon thee." He replied: "I do not wish to, even if He should have mercy upon me, for then it would be mercy coming because of a sin and I do not want that."

Bishr Hafi was asked: "Where dost thou get thy sustenance?" Now, he was very scrupulous in taking precautions (against the unlawful). He used to say: "From the same place others do, but there is a difference between him who eats and weeps and him who eats and laughs." And he said: "It is not less than the hand being more restrained and fewer bites."

## PART TWO: THE DEGREES OF THE LAWFUL AND THE UNLAWFUL

Know that there are degrees of lawfulness and unlawfulness; all are not alike. Some are lawful, others are perfectly lawful, and others are even more perfectly (lawful). The same is true of the unlawful; some things are more disagreeable and filthier. Just as in the case of illness in

<sup>779</sup> Sahl Tustari: Abū Muḥammad Sahl bin ‘Abdullāh bin Yūnus. The Tustari in his name would indicate that he was from Shushtar in southwestern Iran. He was a Sufi who interpreted the Quran allegorically and is credited with many miracles. He died in AH280/896CE.

<sup>780</sup> Wuhayb bin al-Ward: one of four scrupulous men enumerated by Sari Saqati (see Note 763) who earned their livings from the lawful and ate of the lawful. (IKh)

which there is an injurious fever, the hotter it is, the greater the injury. Heat has degrees (of intensity), for honey is not like sugar. The unlawful is the same.

The Islamic ranking of scrupulousness concerning the unlawful and doubtful has five degrees:

THE FIRST DEGREE is the scrupulousness of abstention. That is the general scrupulousness of Muslims: to avoid everything held by evident legal opinion to be unlawful. This is the lowest of the degrees. If a person receives a property of another by an invalid contract with (the seller's) agreement, it is (nonetheless) unlawful. But if it is done with misappropriation, it is more unlawful. If it is taken from an orphan or a poor person, (the sin) is even greater. When the invalid contractual agreement is the cause of usury, its unlawfulness is much greater, even though all these things are called "unlawful." However much a thing is more unlawful, the danger from punishment for it is that much greater and the hope for forgiveness weaker. Just as when a sick man eats honey, the danger to him is much greater than if he were to eat red sugar. The more he eats of it, the danger is that much greater than if he had eaten less.

A person who has studied the whole of the religious jurisprudence knows the details about which is unlawful and which is lawful. Studying all of that is not an obligation upon every person. For that person whose livelihood is neither from the property of (war) booty, nor from the money of the poll tax imposed upon the non-Muslim Peoples of the Book, what is the necessity to study the books of war booty and the poll tax? However, it is the duty of every person to learn as much as he needs: if one's income is from selling, one must learn the rules of sales; if it is from day labor, one must learn the rules of hiring and letting. For every pursuit, there is some information: the craftsman must learn the skills of his craft.

THE SECOND DEGREE is the scrupulousness of the good, who are called righteous. They are those who abstain from whatever the expounders of the Law hold not to be forbidden, but not devoid of doubt.

There are three kinds of doubtfulness: some things about which it is necessary to be careful; other things which it is not necessary to avoid, but doing so is commendable. The obligatory is the first degree; the commendable is the second degree. The third is that one avoid that which is a useless anxiety, such as the person who does not eat the flesh of prey taken in hunting, saying: "Perhaps this (creature) was the someone's property that had run away from the owner." Or, he has a rented house which he leaves, saying: "Perhaps the owner may die and the property fall to an heir"—this, without any indication to substantiate it. It is a useless scruple.

THE THIRD DEGREE is the scrupulousness of the abstinent, who are called the pious. These are the ones who abstain from not only the unlawful and the doubtful, but also the absolutely lawful, but in which there is some fear that something doubtful or unlawful has affected it.

The Messenger (S) said: "A servant (of God) does not attain the degree of the pious until he abstains from a thing for which there is no concern, out of the fear he may fall into something for which there is concern."

'Umar (R) said: "We have abstained from nine-tenths of what is lawful out of the fear that we may fall into the unlawful." For this reason, the person who was owed 100 dirhams would not accept more than ninety-nine lest, if he were to take the full amount, it would be excessive.

'Ali bin Mu'abid says: "I had rented a house. I had written a letter. I wanted to dry it with the dust of the wall."<sup>781</sup> Then I said: 'The wall is not my property, so I shall not do it.' Then I said: 'The amount is not very much.' I sprinkled a small amount of dust on the writing. In a dream, I saw a person who was saying to me: 'Those who say: 'How much is the dust of a wall?' will find out tomorrow at the Resurrection.'"

The persons who are at this level avoid every minor thing that is in the scope of leniency,<sup>782</sup> for it may be that when the way for this has been opened, it will lead to excess, and others may also fall from the level of the pious at the Resurrection. It was for this reason that the Messenger (S) said to Hasan bin 'Ali (R) while (Hasan) was still a child, when he placed a date from the property of the voluntary charity in his mouth: "Tsk, tsk!<sup>783</sup> Spit it out!" That is: "Spit out (the date)."

Some musk taken as booty had been brought in. 'Umar(bin) 'Abd al-'Aziz<sup>784</sup> put it to his nose and said: "Its benefit is its scent, and this is the right of all Muslims." One of the great ones of yore was sitting by the bed of a dying man. When (the man) received the command,<sup>785</sup> the great one extinguished the lamp and said: "The oil (of the lamp) is now the inheritance of his heirs."

'Umar Khattab (R) had placed some musk taken as war-booty in his house so that his wife might sell it on behalf of the Muslims. One

<sup>781</sup> In the days of quill and reed pens, one sprinkled sand over a freshly written page to dry the ink.

<sup>782</sup> "in the scope of leniency" (*mahall-i musāmahat*): permitted things and acts which, if one over indulges in them, one may be distracted from the Way to God.

<sup>783</sup> "Tsk, tsk" (Arabic *kakh, kakh*): the clicking sound made when reproving a child who has taken something he should not. To the present day, Khuzestan is the center for the growing of sugar cane in Iran.

<sup>784</sup> 'Umar 'Abd al-'Aziz: 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, the eighth Umayyad caliph who reigned from AH99/717CE to AH101/720CE. He was noted for his simplicity, piety, and his concern for the welfare of his subjects. He died at the age of 39.

<sup>785</sup> "received the command": That is, he died.

time she came into the house, and ('Umar) smelled the scent of the musk on her head-veil. "What is this?" he demanded. She replied: "I was weighing the musk. My hand took on the scent. I wiped it on my veil." 'Umar (R) took the veil from her, washed it, and then rubbed it in earth, smelling it from time to time, until none of the scent (of the musk) remained. Then he returned it to her. This amount is within the scope of leniency,<sup>786</sup> but 'Umar desired to keep the door to this closed lest it lead to something else, or to have passed over the lawful out of fear of the unlawful and to obtain the spiritual reward of the pious.

Ahmad Hanbal was asked about the person in the mosque who burns incense which is the property of the sultan. He said: "One must go out so as not to smell it, for this is very close to the forbidden." The point is the amount of the scent that would reach a person and infuse his garments. It may be that it is not within the scope of leniency. And he was asked: "If a person obtains a piece of paper containing Traditions, is it lawful for him to copy them without the permission of the owner?"<sup>787</sup> He replied: "No."

'Umar bin Khattab (R) had a wife whom he loved. When he achieved the caliphate, he divorced her fearing that she might intercede in his affairs (of state) and that he might not have the strength to oppose her.

Know that every permitted thing that refers to the intentions of the world are of this kind. When (a person) becomes involved with one, it may throw him into other matters. Indeed, anyone who consumes the lawful to the degree of satiety will remain deprived of the degree of the pious. This is because eating one's fill of the lawful excites the carnal appetites, and then one falls into the quest for (satisfying) them. It is feared that improper thoughts may appear, and it is feared that looking (covetously) may commence. Looking at the property of the worldly and their gardens and pavilions is part of this. They excite the greed for the world and, then, one pursues such things and does the unlawful. It was for this that the Messenger (S) said: "*The love of the world is the source of all error.*" The love of the world is the source of all sins. And the desire for the permitted (things of the) world, for the love of the permitted things of the world is received whole-heartedly and this throws (one) into much seeking of the world which cannot be accomplished without sin—until one comes to remember God Most High (only) with difficulty. The chief of all of these miseries is that the neglect of God Most High triumphs in the soul.

<sup>786</sup> That is, the manner in which the scent had been applied to the veil was permissible and not unlawful.

<sup>787</sup> Persian text of HK edition modified in accordance with the Arabic of *The Revival*, per note in AA edition of text.

And it was for this that Sufyan Thawri (R) as he passed by the exalted gate of a noble in the company of another who looked at it, forbade his friend (from doing so), saying: "If thou wouldest not look at it, he would not squander money on it. Thou becomest a partner in the tyranny of his extravagance."

Ahmad Hanbal was asked about plastering the walls of houses and mosques. He said: "It is lawful for the floor so that dust not arise. As for plastering the walls, I loathe it because it is ostentation." The great ones of the forefathers have said: "The religion of him whose clothes are slight and thin is slight." The gist of this section is that one should refrain from the lawful fearing that it may lead to the unlawful.

THE FOURTH DEGREE is the scrupulousness of the truly righteous, who avoid things lawful also that do not lead one to the unlawful. For, for some reason a sin may have been committed in obtaining it. Examples of this are that Bishr Hafi (R) would not drink water from a canal that a ruler had dug; a party on the way to perform the Greater Pilgrimage would not drink the water of a reservoir that had been dug by a ruler; and some people would not eat the grapes of a garden the water for which was supplied by a canal dug by the ruler.

Ahmad Hanbal disapproved of sewing and doing business in the mosque. He was asked about a spinner sitting and spinning in the domed chamber of a mausoleum. He disliked this and said: "A mausoleum is for the Hereafter."

A male slave took a lamp from the residence of a king. (The slave's) master extinguished the lamp. The strap of someone's shoe became undone. The torch of the king was being carried. He avoided that light lest it make the strap beautiful. A woman was spinning. The light from the king's torch passed over her. She rose and did not spin in that light.<sup>788</sup>

Dhu al-Nun<sup>789</sup> the Egyptian was thrown into prison. He went hungry for several days. A pious woman who was his disciple sent him food (paid for) by her work as a spinner, but he did not eat it. Then the woman rebuked him, saying: "Thou knewest that what I sent thee was lawful and thou wert hungry! Why didst thou not eat it?" He replied: "Because it came to me on the tray of a tyrant and in the hand of a jailer." So, he had abstained because his receiving it was through the

<sup>788</sup> The point of these anecdotes is that the light was from the ruler's property and al-Ghazzali considered the property of kings unlawful, or at best doubtful. The three persons refrained even using the light that fell from such a source.

<sup>789</sup> Dhu al-Nun: Dhū al-Nún al-Miṣrī, Abū al-Fayḍ Thawabān bin Ibrāhīm. Living in Egypt, he was a famous mystic of Nubian origin. Qushayri cites a large number of anecdotes about him, as does Hujwiri. 'Attar also mentions him. He died AH245/859-60CE.

strength of the hand of an oppressor, and that strength had come from (consuming) the unlawful. This is the greatest degree of caution in this section.

It may be that a person who does not know the truth of this is led by scruples to not eating any food from the hand of any sinner. This is not the case. It is restricted to the oppressor who consumes the unlawful and who derives his strength from doing so. However, if some one, for example, commits adultery, his strength does not derive from adultery. Therefore, the strength by which he presents the food does not derive from unlawful deeds.

Sari Saqati says: "One day I came upon some water in the desert and saw some greenery. I said: 'Let me eat and drink of this, for if there be anything lawful that I have ever eaten or drunk, it will be this.' I heard a voice saying: 'Whence came the strength which has delivered thee to this place?'" He said: "I became regretful and sought forgiveness (from God)."

This is the degree of the truly righteous. They thought subtle thoughts in these precautions. Now, this has been changed into the care in washing clothes and seeking water. But (the truly righteous) would have taken this laxly. They went about barefooted and purified themselves with whatever water they found. However, that purification is an external adornment and for the people to see, but within, the spirit has a great greed. It keeps Muslims occupied with (the externals) deceptively. The adornment of the inner self, which is where God looks, is much more difficult.

THE FIFTH DEGREE is the scrupulousness of the proximate ones (to God)<sup>790</sup> and the Unitarians<sup>791</sup> who consider everything unlawful for themselves—eating, sleeping, talking, all of it—except that it be (in the service of) God Most High. These are a people who have become of one ambition and one character. They are perfect monotheists.

A story is told about Yahya bin Yahya, that he had taken some medicine. His wife said: "Walk about the house a little." He said: "I do not consider such walking proper. I have kept count for thirty years so that I do not make any move except for my own religion."

Thus, these people do not move save with religious intentions. If they eat, they eat no more than is necessary to maintain their minds and

<sup>790</sup> "the proximate ones (to God)" (*muqarrabān*): literally, "those who are brought near." The word is used several times in the Quran (in Surah 83, vv. 21 & 28, for example) to denote those favored angels and persons who are in close attendance to God Most High. More generally, it can mean "close companion, intimate, confidante," etc.

<sup>791</sup> "Unitarians" (*muwahhidān*): believers in the absolute unity of God, not to be confused with the members of the modern Unitarian Church, the tenets of which are quite different.

lives in order to have the strength for worship. If they speak, they say that which is in the path of their faith. Everything other than this, they hold unlawful.

These are the degrees of scrupulousness. Indeed, thou wilt not hear less than this. Thou knowest thyself; thou knowest thine own worthlessness. If thou desirest to be in the first degree, which is the degree the level of scrupulousness of abstention, so that thou may not be called a sinner, thou wilt be incapable (of doing so). When the affair reaches talk, thou openest thy mouth wide and talk of the kingdom of heaven; but thou disdainest the clear speech which is in the study of the Religious Law. Instead, thou wishest to talk incoherently with prolixity.

In the Traditions, it is related that the Messenger (S) said: "The worst people are those who maintain themselves in affluence, eat many kinds of food and wear many kinds of clothing, and then, when they open their mouths, they utter pious things." May God Most High protect us from these calamities by His Own grace.

### PART THREE: CONCERNING THE SEPARATION OF THE LAWFUL FROM THE UNLAWFUL AND AN INVESTIGATION OF THAT

Know that a group of people have thought that all the goods of the world are unlawful, or (at least) most of them. They are of three kinds: Those who are overwhelmed by precaution and scrupulousness have said: "We should eat nothing except the plants which are in the desert and the flesh of fish, hunted prey, and the like." A group overcome by sloth and carnality have said: "No distinction should be made; we should eat of everything." And a group closer to moderation has said: "God Most High created it; everything must be eaten, but in the amount of one's need."

However, all three of these are definitely in error. Indeed, the correct view is that lawfulness is always clear, as is unlawfulness. Doubtfulness is in the middle until the Resurrection.<sup>792</sup> just as the Messenger (S) has said.

That person who supposes that most of the property of the world is unlawful is mistaken. There is much that is unlawful, but not *most*. There is a difference between *much* and *most*; just as there are many sick people, travelers, and soldiers, but they are not the majority. And there are many oppressors, but there are more who are oppressed. We have spoken about the nature of this error in *The Revival* with explanations and proofs.

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<sup>792</sup> That is, disagreements about the doubtful will be settled on the Day of Resurrection.

The main point is that thou shouldst understand that people have not been commanded to consume (only) that which in the knowledge of God Most High is lawful, for a person has not the ability to do that. Rather, they have been commanded: "Eat that which ye believe to be lawful until the unlawfulness of it has been established." This is always easily come by. The proof of this is that the Messenger (S) purified himself from the water-pot of a polytheist. And 'Umar (R) purified himself from the pitcher of a Christian woman. If they were thirsty, they would drink, but drinking the impure is not lawful. It is probable that their hands were unclean from drinking wine or eating carrion, but since the impurity was not (directly) known by them, they deemed them clean.

The Companions used to eat the food in every city they came upon, and they would conduct business—even though in their times, (the inhabitants of those towns) were all thieves, usurers, and wine-sellers. They did not abstain from the entire world, nor did they consider everything equal. They were not content with the amount of necessity. Consequently, thou must know that, with respect to thee, people are of six kinds:

**THE FIRST KIND** is the unknown person. Thou knowest nothing of his righteousness or corruption. When thou art in a strange city, it is lawful to buy bread from whomever thou wishest, or have transactions with them. Everything that is in (a person's) possession is superficially his property. This is sufficient evidence. (A contractual agreement) with him cannot be nullified except in the case of evidence of unlawfulness. However, if a person hesitates and seeks out a person who knows something of the other's character, it is out of the scrupulousness; but it is not an obligation.

**THE SECOND KIND** is the one thou knowest to be righteous. Eating from his property is lawful and there is no hesitation out of scrupulousness. Rather, such (scrupulousness) would be a misgiving (prompted by Satan). And should that person be hurt by thy hesitation, such an injury would be a sin, for thinking evil of the righteous is itself a sin.

**THE THIRD KIND** is one whom thou knowest to be unjust—such as Turks, or royal operatives—or thou knowest that all of his wealth, or most of it, has been unlawfully obtained. One must avoid his property—unless thou knowest that it has been lawfully obtained—and here an obvious sign appears from his circumstance, for his hand is the hand of a usurper.

**THE FOURTH KIND** is the one, most of whose wealth thou knowest to be lawful, but not absolutely free of the unlawful in that he is

a village magistrate and his is a government office, or he is a merchant who conducts business with the ruler, even though most of his property is lawful. It is permitted to accept from that larger part which is lawful. However, avoidance of this is an important scruple.

'Abdullah Mubarak's broker wrote to him from Basrah: "There is business to be done with those who do business with the rulers, is it lawful to do business with them?" He replied: "If they have no business other than that with the rulers, then do not do business with them. However, if they do business with others too, it is lawful to do business with them."

**THE FIFTH KIND** is one with whose oppression thou art not acquainted and thou hast no information about (the source of) his wealth. Yet, thou seest the signs of injustice about him, such as the headgear, robes, and the appearance of the military. This, too, is an obvious sign and one should avoid doing business with him until thou knowest whence he obtains the wealth he gives to thee.

**THE SIXTH KIND** is that thou dost not see any sign of oppression on the person, but thou dost see a sign of disobedience (of God's Law) about him, such as the wearing of silk, the possession of household goods made of gold, or thou knowest that he drinks wine and looks at women not of the prohibited classes.<sup>793</sup> The truth of this that thou shouldst not avoid his property, for (his behavior) does not change it into the unlawful more than that which has been said: "Since he considers (his behavior) lawful, it may be that he also does not abstain from the unlawful." In this, it is not possible to make a judgment about the unlawfulness of his property, for no one is innocent of sin and there are many people who avoid injustice, even though they do not avoid sin.

This rule in the difference between the lawful and the unlawful must be observed: if one eats something unlawful unknowingly, he will not be help culpable. Just as formal prayer with some uncleanness (on one's person or clothing) is not lawful, but if the person does not realize that there is some uncleanness, he is not guilty (of any lapse). Should he realize it after the formal prayer, in one opinion he does not have to make up the prayer, for the Messenger (S), while performing a formal prayer, took off his shoes and did not start the prayer over again. He said: "Gabriel, on whom be peace, informed me that the shoes were soiled."

Know that every place where we have said: "Scrupulousness is important even if it is not an obligation," it is fitting that one enquire of (the owner of the goods) about their source on the condition that his feelings are not injured. If the person will be distressed by such a

<sup>793</sup> "women not of the prohibited degrees" (*nā mahram*):

question, asking it is unlawful. For, scrupulousness is a precaution, while injuring the feelings of others is (definitely) unlawful. Rather, one should be kind and find some pretext not to eat of it. If one cannot do that, eat so that he will not be hurt. To ask another person about this from whom the first might hear (of thy questioning) is unlawful. For this is spying, backbiting, and suspicion. All of these are unlawful. They do not become permissible for taking precautions.

The Messenger (S) was a guest and did not ask. He accepted gifts and did not ask whether it was a gift or a voluntary charity, except when the cause for doubt was obvious. In the beginning, when he went to Madinah, he would ask whether anything given to him was a gift or charity, as there was room for doubt, and no one's feelings were hurt by this.

Know that if, in a market, the property of a ruler is placed for sale, or sheep taken as plunder, and if one knows that most of the property in that market is unlawful, one should not buy (anything) before asking and enquiring about its origin. If most of it is not unlawful, buying without asking is lawful, but asking out of scrupulousness is important.

#### **PART FOUR: CONCERNING THE STIPENDS GIVEN BY RULERS, GREETING THEM, AND ACCEPTING THAT PART OF THEIR WEALTH WHICH IS LAWFUL**

Know that everything that is the hands of the rulers of this era<sup>794</sup> is from the taxes paid by Muslims, from confiscation, or from bribery, all of which are unlawful. The lawful in their hands is of three kinds of wealth: the property taken from the unbelievers as booty (in war), the poll tax<sup>795</sup> paid by the protected non-Muslims—when it is collected according to the conditions of the Religious Law, and the legacies that fall in their hands from those who die without heirs, as that property is for common interest.

Since the times are thus, when lawful property is rare and most is from the unlawful and from confiscation, it is not proper to accept anything from them so long as thou dost not know that it has been (obtained) in a lawful manner: that is, from war booty, the poll-tax, or legacies.

It is lawful that a king, too, cultivate a property. That is lawful for him. But if the labor is by corvée, doubtfulness infuses it, even if it does not become unlawful. If he purchases a property in trust,<sup>796</sup> it is also

<sup>794</sup> Ghazzali, of course, is referring to his own era.

<sup>795</sup> "poll tax" (*jizyah*): See Note 521.

<sup>796</sup> "property in trust": *dhimmah*.

his property, but as the price paid for it may come from unlawful sources, there is room for doubt (about its lawfulness).

Therefore, everyone who receives a stipend from a king, if it is derived from his private property, in an amount sufficient to be lawful, but if it is charged to legacies or funds for the common good, it is not lawful, so long as the common welfare of the Muslims is not dependent upon that person, as would be in the case of a jurisprudent, judge, theologian, endowments commissioner, or a physician.

In summary, a person who works in a profession in which the public welfare lies, and students are counted among these, as is the person who is poor and incapable of earning his livelihood—such people all have rights in this. But as for the learned and others of that description, it is lawful—if they do not dissemble with the official of a ruler in this and do not agree with them in wrong acts and do not give sanction to them in (their) oppression. On the contrary, they should not approach them. If they do so, it is under the conditions of the Law, the description of which we have (already) given.

#### EXCURSUS: CONCERNING THE RELATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH RULERS AND THE OFFICIALS OF RULERS

Know that there are three situations for religious scholars and rulers:

ONE IS THAT one does not go near them, nor do they come near them. The safety of religion lies in this.

THE SECOND SITUATION is that they go to the ruler and give him a salutation. In the Religious Law, this is despised greatly, unless there be a necessity. For the Messenger (S) described the attributes of the oppressive ruler and then said: "Whoever seeks distance from them has been delivered." And he said: "After this, there may be tyrannical rulers. Whoever winks at their lies and injustice and consents to them, is not of me and at the Resurrection he will not be allowed to approach my pool (of Kawthar)." And he said: "To God Most High the most inimical of the religious scholars are those who call upon princes." And he said: "The worst rulers are those who go the religious scholars." And he said: "The religious scholars are trustees of the messengers (of God) so long as they do not mix with kings. When they do that, they betray their trust. Avoid them and stay away from them."

Abu Dharr<sup>797</sup> said to Salamah:<sup>798</sup> "Stay far from the court of the king, for nothing of his world will come to thee from which its increase

<sup>797</sup> Abu Dharr: Abu Dharr Ghaffari, see Note 596.

will not subtract from thy religion." And he said: "There is a valley in hell in which there is no one save the savants who pay visits on kings." 'Ubādah bin al-Samit<sup>799</sup> says: "The friendship of religious scholars and the ascetics with princes is proof of (their) hypocrisy. And their friendship with the rich is the proof of (their) dissimulation." Ibn Mas'ud says: "There is the man of sound religion who goes to a rich man and returns without religion." They asked: "In what manner?" He said: "He seeks their agreement for something which arouses the ire of God Most High." Fuḍayl<sup>800</sup> says: "As much as a learned person approaches a king he distances himself from God Most High." Wahb<sup>801</sup> says: "The damage done to the Muslims by these religious scholars who visit a king is greater than the damage done by gamblers." And Muhammad bin Salamah<sup>802</sup> says: "A fly on a person's feces is better than the religious scholars in the court of a king."

#### EXCURSUS: [THE SINS OF APPROACHING THE UNJUST]<sup>803</sup>

Know that the reason for these strictures is that whoever goes near a king is in danger of falling into sin: either in behavior, in speech, in remaining silent, or in belief.

*AS FOR THE SIN IN BEHAVIOR:* it is usually the case that the palaces (of the unjust) have been seized forcibly. So, it is not right to enter that place. If, for example, one is in the desert or an open field, their tents and furnishings are unlawful. It is not right to enter or step upon (the carpets). And if, for example, one is on permissible land—without carpets of tents—and he greets (an unjust person) and bows his head to him, he has abased himself to an oppressor, and that is not lawful. Indeed, in the Traditions it is related that whoever humbles himself before a powerful person because of his power and wealth, even if that person is not unjust, loses two portions of his faith.

Therefore, nothing other than a salutation is permitted. As for kissing his hand, bowing low, and lowering the head; all of this is improper, except before a just ruler, the learned, or those who by cause

<sup>798</sup> Salamah: Salamah bin 'Amr bin al-Akwā' al-Aslāmī. A Companion of the Prophet who took part in several military expeditions.

<sup>799</sup> 'Ubādah bin al-Samit ('Ubādah bin al-Sāmit): One of the Ansar (*Anṣār*: Helpers) and one of the twelve who pledged allegiance to him at Al-'Aqabah and also one of the seventy at the Second Pledge of Al-'Aqabah. He fought in all of the battles and died AH34/654-5CE.

<sup>800</sup> Fuḍayl: Fuḍayl 'Iyād, see Note 670.

<sup>801</sup> Wahb: Probably Wahb bin Munabbih, see Note 819.

<sup>802</sup> Muhammad bin Salamah: An anecdote about the encounter of a man by this name with a Najdi girl is related by Ibn Khallikan, who also mentions him in other places. Perhaps this is he whom Ghazzali is quoting.

<sup>803</sup> From the AA text.

of their religion deserve this deference. Some of the forefathers exceeded this and would not return the salutation of unjust persons in order to show their contempt for them because of their oppression.

**AS FOR THE SIN IN SPEECH:** It is that one offer supplications for them and say, for example: "May God grant thee life and shower His blessings upon thee!" This and things like it are not fitting, for the Messenger (S) says: "Whoever, on behalf an oppressor, supplicates (God) for his lengthy life desires that there will always be someone sinning against God on earth." Consequently, no such supplication is appropriate, except to say: "*May God improve the,*" or "*May God make thee successful in good deeds, may God lengthen thy life in obedience to Him.*" When one has finished the supplication, it is usual to show one's eagerness to be of service by saying: "I always desire to be continually at thy service." If this eagerness is not in one's heart, one has uttered a lie and has been hypocritical unnecessarily. If one does feel that in one's heart, any heart that is eager to see the unjust is devoid of the light of being of a Muslim. Indeed, thou shouldst detest the sight anyone who opposes God Most High, for he opposes thee.

After finishing this, one begins to praise (the oppressor's) justice, fairness, generosity, and things resembling those. These are not untainted with lies and hypocrisy. The least is that it encourages the heart of the oppressor, and this is not right. When finishing this, it is usual that the tyrant utter some nonsense, and (the listener) must nod his head and validate (his words). All of this is sinful.

**AS FOR THE SIN OF REMAINING SILENT:** That is that one see in (the oppressor's) residence silken furnishings and pictures (of living beings) upon the walls while he is wearing garments of silk and golden rings and uses silver ewers and utters foul words and lies. Amidst all of this, an accounting<sup>804</sup> is necessary and one should not remain silent. If one is afraid to call to account, one is excused, but there is no excuse for going (to the king) unnecessarily. It is not proper to be in a place of sin unnecessarily where one cannot call (sinners) to account.

**AS FOR THE SIN OF THE SOUL AND BELIEF:** It is that one incline (to a king) and like him and humble oneself believing (in him). One looks at his comforts and the desire for the world pulses in one. The Messenger (S) says: "*O people of the emigration!* Go ye not to the worldly, for they will be angered by the provisions God has provided you." Jesus (A) says: "Do not look at the property of the worldly, for the brightness of their world will take away the sweetness of faith from your souls."

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<sup>804</sup> "accounting": Ghazzali uses the word *hisbat* which refers to a particular institution in Islam and will be discussed in Chapter Nine below.

Therefore, from all of this thou must know that there is no permission to go to any tyrannical person, except for two reasons: One is that there is a command from the ruler, with coercion. Should one disobey, there is the fear that one may be tormented, or that the majesty of the king may be harmed, prompting his subjects to become audacious.<sup>805</sup> The other is that one's rights have suffered some injustice, or for the sake of interceding for the rights of a Muslim. There is leniency in these on the condition that one does not lie, does not laud (the ruler), and does not withhold harsh counsel. If one fears that the counsel will not be received kindly, or if one knows that he will not accept it, one must (at least) refrain from false praise. There are those persons who give themselves airs, saying: "I shall go to intercede." But, if the matter is taken care of through the intercession of another, or another finds acceptance, he becomes upset. This is a sign that he does not go out of necessity.

THE THIRD SITUATION is that one does not go to the rulers, but the rulers come to one. The requirement of this is that when he offers a salutation, one return it. If one shows honor and stands, it is lawful, because (the ruler's) coming is in honor of knowledge, and this goodness deserves honoring, just as injustice deserves contempt. However, if one does not rise and shows one's disdain for the world, it is to be preferred, unless it is feared that (the ruler) will cause trouble for him lest the awe of the ruler may decrease among his subjects.

When he takes his seat, three kinds of counsel become obligatory: One is that if (the king) does anything not knowing that it is unlawful, (the scholar) should acquaint him of that. Another, if (the ruler) does something and knows that it is unlawful—such as injustice or lewdness—one should threaten (him with divine punishment) and counsel him, saying: "The pleasures of the world are not worth the loss of the kingdom of the Hereafter for their sake," and things of that nature. The third is that if the opportunity arises and if one thinks (the ruler) will tolerate it, one should admonish him about things neglected concerning the people's care and welfare.

These three are obligatory upon the person who goes to the king if there is the hope of acceptance. If he be a qualified scholar, his words will not be devoid of acceptance. However, if there is a covetousness for (the ruler's) world, it is better that he remain silent, for there will be no benefit except that he will be laughed at.

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<sup>805</sup> In the view of most Muslim thinkers, even a bad ruler is better than no ruler at all. Tyranny is better than anarchy.

Muqatil bin Salih<sup>806</sup> says: "I was with Hammad bin Salamah.<sup>807</sup> In each of his rooms, there was a copy (of the Holy Quran), a straw mat, a small leathern bag, and water-pot for purification. Someone knocked on the door. He said: 'It is Muhammad bin Sulayman,<sup>808</sup> the caliph of the time. He entered, sat down, and said: 'For what reason is it that whenever I visit thee my heart becomes full of awe?' Hammad said: 'Because the Messenger (S) has said that everyone is afraid of the scholar whose aim is the knowledge of God Most High. If his goal is the world, he is afraid of everyone.' Then (the caliph) presented (Hammad) with 40.000 dirhams and said: 'Spend this is some way.' (Hammad) said: 'Go and give it to its rightful owner.' (The caliph) swore that he had obtained the money from a lawful legacy. (Hammad) said: 'I have no need of it.' (The caliph) said: 'Divide it among the Muslims and the deserving.' (Hammad) replied: 'It may be that I divide it justly, but some one may say that I did not observe equity. It will turn into a sin and I do not want that.' And he did not accept it."

The state and speech of the religious scholars with kings was like that. When they went to them, it was like the time Tawus (bin Kaysan)<sup>809</sup> went to Hisham bin 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>810</sup> who was the caliph. When Hisham arrived at Madinah, (Tawus) said: "Bring some one of the Companions to me." They brought Tawus to him. When he entered, he took off his shoes and said: "*Peace be upon thee, O Hisham! How art thou, O Hisham?*" Then Hisham became greatly enraged (at this familiarity) and decided to execute (Tawus). They said: "This is the sacred precinct of the Messenger (S) and this man is one of the great religious scholars; it cannot be done."

So (Hisham) said: "O Tawus, with what audacity didst thou do this?" (Tawus) asked: "What have I done?" (The caliph's) anger increased. He said: "Thou hast violated four rules of courtesy. One: thou didst take off thy shoes upon my carpet" This was repugnant to them because one was supposed to stand before them wearing stockings and

<sup>806</sup> Muqatil bin Salih (Muqātil bin Ṣāliḥ): besides his being a contemporary of Hammad bin Salamah (see Note 771), no further information presently available.

<sup>807</sup> Hammad bin Salamah: see Note 771.

<sup>808</sup> Muhammad bin Sulayman: there is a possibility that this is a reference to the Hasanid Muhammad bin Sulaymān who established himself at Madinah in opposition to the Abbasids in the late 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century. No available sources show a caliph by the name of Muhammad bin Sulayman in the genealogical tables of the period.

<sup>809</sup> Tawus (bin Kaysan): 'Abd al-Rahmān Tāwūs bin Kaysān Yamanī, one of the Followers of Persian extraction. His religious decisions are famous and he heard Traditions directly from Abu Hurayrah (see Note 406) and Ibn 'Abbas (see Note 357). He died at Makkah AH106/724-5CE. (*Lata'iif*)

<sup>810</sup> Hisham bin 'Abd al-Malik (Hishām bin 'Abd al-Malik): Considered one of the three greatest Umayyad caliphs (the others being his father 'Abd al-Malik and Mu'awiyah I), he was an excellent administrator and the empire prospered during his reign at Damascus (AH105/724CE to AH125/743CE).

shoes; this is now the protocol in court of the caliph. "Next, thou didst not address me as Commander of the Believers; next thou didst address me by name without my nickname."<sup>811</sup> This was displeasing to the Arabs. "And next thou didst sit down in front of me without permission and thou didst not kiss my hand."

Tawus replied: "As for my removing my shoes in front of thee, every day I take them off five times before my own Lord (Who is the Lord) of all creation. He does not get angry with me (for that). As for my not saying 'Commander of the Believers,' that was because not all the people agree to thy commandership; I was afraid that I would be speaking a lie. As for my addressing thee by name and without the nickname, God Most High addresses His Own friends by name, not by nickname. He said 'O Adam, O David, O John,<sup>812</sup> O Moses, O Jesus, but He addressed His enemies by their nicknames. He said: "*The hands of Abu Lahab will perish.*"<sup>813</sup> As for my not kissing thy hand, I heard the Commander of the Believers, 'Ali (R) say: 'It is not lawful for anyone to kiss a hand, except the hand of one's wife in passion, or the hand of a child in compassion.' As for my sitting in front of thee, I heard the Commander of the Believers, 'Ali (R) say: 'To whoever wants to see a man in hell, tell him to look at a man seated while all those before him are on their feet.'"

Hisham was pleased (by the words of Tawus). He said: "Give me some advice." (Tawus) said: "I heard 'Ali (R) say: 'There are snakes in hell, each as large as a mountain, and there are scorpions, each as large as a camel. They are waiting for princes who are unjust to their subjects.'" Having said this, (Tawus) rose and departed.

When Sulayman (bin) 'Abd al-Malik<sup>814</sup> was caliph, upon reaching Madinah he summoned Abu Hazim,<sup>815</sup> one of the great theologians of his time, and said to him: "For what reason do we detest death?" (Abu Hazim) replied: "Because thou hast made the world a flourishing place, but the Hereafter a ruin. Whoever must leave a

<sup>811</sup> "nickname" (*kunyat*): See Translator's Introduction. (Ghazzali uses *kunyat* instead of *kunyah*. They are the same.)

<sup>812</sup> John (*Yahyā*): A reference to the John who is called "the Baptist" in Christian tradition. The *Yahyā* form of John is reserved for John the Baptist. Other Biblical Johns are called *Yūhanān*.

<sup>813</sup> (Q. 111:1) Abu Lahab (*Abū Lahab*: Father of Flame) was the epithet applied to 'Abdul 'Uzzah, the only time in the Quran that an opponent of the Prophet (S) was denounced by name. He was the Prophet's uncle and the only member of his clan to oppose his mission.

<sup>814</sup> Sulayman (bin) 'Abd al-Malik, a caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, reigned AH96/715CE to AH99/717CE.

<sup>815</sup> Abu Hazim: *Abū Ḥazīm Salamah bin Dīnār al-Ṭārisī al-‘Araj*. One of the Followers (the generations closely following the Companions) of Madinah, an important scholar and ascetic. He solved many moral and legal difficulties for his contemporaries. He died AH140/757-8CE. (*Lata’if*)

flourishing abode for an abode of ruins must sorrow." (The caliph) asked: "What will the condition of the people be when they go before God Most High?" He replied: "As for the doers of good it will be like the person who has returned from a journey, meeting his own beloved ones; as for the ones who have done evil, they will be seized as though they were fleeing slaves and brought before God by force." (The caliph) said: "I wish that I knew what my condition will be." (Abu Hazim) said: "Open thyself to the Quran so that thou may know that it says: *Surely the righteous are in bliss and surely the wicked are in hell.*" (Q. 82:13-14) (Sulayman) asked: "Then where is God's mercy?" He answered: "*Surely the mercy of God is near the doers of good.* (Q. 7:56) It is near the beneficent."

The speech of the religious scholars with kings was like that. For the worldly scholars, their speech with them is of supplication, praise, and adulation. They are in search of something to say that will please them, and they look for tricks and leniency in order to achieve their ends. If they give advice, it is to validate their purpose. Its sign is that if that (same) advice is given by another, they become envious.

In whatever fashion it may be (accomplished), not seeing the unjust is better lest one associate with them. Neither should one associate with the people who associate with them. If a person is not able to avoid mixing with them so long as one does not flee from others and cut oneself off from them, one should retire into seclusion and abandon mixing with everyone.

The Messenger (S) says: "This people will always be under the protecting wing of God Most High so long as the religious scholars do not mix with princes." In sum, the cause of the corruption of the subjects is the corruption of the kings and rulers, and the corruption of the rulers is from the corruption of the religious scholars who neither correct nor forbid them.

#### EXCURSUS: [THE PREREQUISITES OF ACCEPTING THINGS FROM RULERS]<sup>816</sup>

Should a ruler send some property to a scholar for distribution amongst charities, if one knows that there is a definite owner for it,<sup>817</sup> it is of course not proper to distribute it. Indeed, one should say that it should be returned to its (rightful) owner. But, if the ownership is not clear, some religious scholars prohibit its acceptance and distribution, but in our opinion it is preferable that it be accepted and distributed amongst charities so that it will leave (the ruler's) hand and not become the means

<sup>816</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>817</sup> That is, if the property given by the ruler can be proven to have been taken forcibly or illegally from a verifiable person.

of his (further) injustice, while (by its distribution) the poor may obtain some ease. The judgment about this property is that it should reach the poor, but with three conditions:

THE FIRST CONDITION is that by (one's) accepting it, the ruler not think that his wealth is in itself lawful, because (in his thinking) if it were not lawful (the scholar) would not have accepted it.<sup>818</sup> The evil from this is greater than the merit of its (charitable) distribution.

THE SECOND CONDITION is that that scholar not be in a place where others may follow his example in accepting it, while remaining unaware of its distribution (to the poor) so that a group may suppose that Imam Shafi'i (R) has accepted money from the caliphs but be unaware that he had distributed all of it (to the poor).

Both Wahb bin Munabbih<sup>819</sup> and Tawus went to the brother of Hajjaj one cold morning. Tawus was counseling him. (The brother of Hajjaj) ordered that a mantle be put around Tawus' shoulders. Tawus was speaking and moving about so that the mantle fell off. Hajjaj's brother was aware of this and became angry. When they left, Wahb said: "O Tawus! If thou hadst accepted that mantle and given it to a poor person, it would have been better than angering him." Tawus said: "I was not secure that others who imitate me and accept something from him would not know that I gave it away to a poor person."

THE THIRD CONDITION is that friendship with an oppressor not be born in one's heart for sake for the wealth that he has sent one for distribution. For, the friendship of the unjust is the cause of many sins, which are (in turn) the cause of flattery.<sup>820</sup> It becomes the reason for anxiety about (the oppressor's) loss of office or death and the cause of his delight in the increase of (the oppressor's) pomp and power.

It is for this reason that the Messenger (S) said: "O Lord God! Do not permit any sinner to do me a good turn lest my heart then incline to him." He said this because the heart necessarily inclines to anyone who does thee a good turn. God Most High says: "*And incline not to those who do wrong, lest the Fire touch you.*" (Q. 11:113)

<sup>818</sup> It must be remembered that Ghazzali holds that most of the wealth of rulers is unlawful, but some categories are lawful (see above). The uncritical acceptance of such a gift from the king might imply the lawfulness of all of the king's wealth, and that would be a great wrong, in Ghazzali's view.

<sup>819</sup> Wahb bin Munabbih: A transmitter of Tradition and an authority on both Jewish and Christian lore, of Yemenite—possibly ultimately Persian—origin. He was born c. AH34/654CE and died in either AH110/728CE or AH114/732CE.

<sup>820</sup> "flattery" (*mudāhanat*): the word of Arabic origin comes from a root (*d-h-n*) relating to oil and lubrication. Hence, this form can mean acting hypocritically, dissembling, cheating, etc., as well as flattery.

One of the caliphs sent ten thousand dirhams to Malik Dinar. He distributed all of it and did not retain a single dirham. Muhammad (bin) Wasi' saw him and said: "Tell the truth, has thy heart inclined any more to friendship with him for that reason?" He said: "Yes." He said: "I was afraid of that. In the end, the evil of that wealth has done its work with thee."

One of the great men of Basrah accepted some wealth from a ruler and distributed it. He was asked: "Art thou not afraid that their friendship will quicken in thy heart?" He replied: "If a person takes my hand and leads me to heaven and then commits a sin, should I hold him as an enemy? Do I have enmity for that person who utilized him to take my hand and lead me to heaven?" If a person has this strength, there is no fear if he distributes their property.

**CHAPTER FIVE: CONCERNING THE DISCHARGE OF  
THE DUTIES OF ASSOCIATION WITH PEOPLE AND  
OBSERVING THE RIGHTS OF RELATIVES, NEIGHBORS,  
SLAVES, AND OBSERVING THE RIGHTS OF FRIENDS,  
THE POOR, AND THE BRETHREN  
FOR THE SAKE OF GOD**

Know that the world is one station of the stations of the journey to God Most High. All in this station are travelers. Since the destination of journey of this caravan of travelers is the same, they are all as one. There must be friendship and unity among them and mutual aid. They must respect the rights of one another. We shall recount an explanation of the rights of association with people in three parts: First, Concerning Friendship and Brotherhood for the Sake of God; Second, Concerning the Rights of Friends; and Third, Concerning the Rights of Muslims, Family,<sup>821</sup> Relatives, Slaves, and Others.

**PART ONE: CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP AND BROTHERHOOD  
FOR THE SAKE OF GOD MOST HIGH**

Thou needest to know that friendship and taking (others) as brothers for the sake of God Most High are among the most meritorious of the acts of worship and have important places in religion. The Messenger (S) said: "For whomever God Most High wishes goodness, He grants him the sustenance of a suitable friend." And he said: "No two Muslims ever come together that there is not a benefit for each from the other in religion." And he said: "Whoever accepts some one as his brother for the sake of God Most High is given a high rank in heaven which cannot be attained by any other deed."

Abu Idris Khawlani<sup>822</sup> said to Mu'adh:<sup>823</sup> "I love thee for the sake of God Most High." (Mu'adh) replied: "Let there be glad tidings to thee for I heard the Messenger (S) say: 'At the Resurrection there will be chairs placed in a circle around the Throne of God upon which some people will be seated with faces shining like the full moon. All of the people will be anxious, but they will be secure. All will be in fear, but they will be tranquil. They are the saints of God Most High. Neither will they be in fear, nor will they sorrow.' They asked: 'O Messenger of God,

<sup>821</sup> Family: The word used here is *raḥim*, and means "born from the same womb, uterine relatives."

<sup>822</sup> Abu Idris Khawlani: Abū Idrīs Ḥāfiẓ Allāh bin Ḥabdullāh al-Khawlānī (AH8/629-30CE to AH80/699CE). Considered one of the pious devotees, he settled in Damascus and taught in the mosque. He later became a judge. He transmitted many Traditions.

<sup>823</sup> Mu'adh: Mu'adh Jabal (see Note 399).

who are these people?' He answered: '*Those who love each other in God.*'<sup>824</sup> They are a group who love each other for the sake of God.'"

And the Messenger (S) said: "There are not two persons who love each other for the sake of God that the one more beloved by God is the one loves the other the most." And he said: "God Most High says: 'My love is a right for those who visit one another for My sake, who love each other for My sake, who are generous to each other with their wealth for My sake, and who aid each other for My sake.'" And he said: "On the Day of Resurrection God Most High will say: 'Where are those persons who loved each other for My sake so that I may keep them in My shadow on this day when there is no shade for the people in which to take refuge?'"

And he said: "There are seven persons on the Day of Resurrection who, when there will be no shade for anyone, will be in the shadow of God Most High: the just leader, the young person who began worshipping God Most High at the beginning of his youth, the man who leaves the mosque with his heart attached to the mosque until he returns to it again, two people who love each other for the sake of God Most High and who come together for that and separate for that, the person who remembers God Most High in private and whose eyes fill with tears, the man who when called by a magnificent and beautiful woman says to her: 'I fear God Most High,' and the man who gives voluntary charity with his right hand so that the left hand has no knowledge of it." And he said: "No one visits a brother for the sake of God Most High save that an angel cries out, saying: 'Be happy and blessed! Thine is the heaven of God Most High!'"

And he said: "A man was going to visit a friend. God Most High sent an angel in his path who asked: 'Where goest thou?' He replied: 'To visit such-and-such a brother.' (The angel) asked: 'Dost thou have some business with him?' He said: 'No.' (The angel) asked: 'Art thou related to him in some way?' He said: 'No.' (The angel) asked: 'Has he done something good for thee?' He answered: 'No.' (The angel) said: 'Then why art thou going to him?' He answered: 'I love him for the sake of God.' (The angel) said: 'Then, God Most High has sent me to thee to give thee the good news that God Most High loves thee because of thy love for him, and has made heaven an obligation for both of you yourselves.'"<sup>825</sup> And the Messenger (S) said: "The strongest resort of faith is love and enmity for the sake of God Most High."

<sup>824</sup> *Those who love each other in God*: Arabic: *al-mutahabbūna fi-llāh*.

<sup>825</sup> In the final sentence of this passage, the plural "you" (*shumā*) is used, thereby including the addressee and his friend, while the preceding sentences used the singular "you" (*tū*), a great advantage for languages such as Persian which retain the distinction between singular and plural in second-person pronouns.

God Most High sent revelations to some of the prophets (A) saying: "With this asceticism that thou dost practice thou dost hasten thine own comfort so that thou may be delivered from the world and its sorrow. As for these acts of worshipping Me that thou dost engage in, with them thou obtainest thine own glory. But, behold! Hast thou never loved My friends for My sake and hast thou never been the enemy of My enemies?"

God Most High revealed to Jesus (A): "If thou dost perform all the acts of worship of the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and hast not made friendship and enemies for My sake, there is no profit." And Jesus (A) said: "Make thyself a friend of God Most High by being inimical to His enemies and those who rise against Him. Make thyself near to God Most High by distancing thyself from them. Seek the satisfaction of God Most High by becoming angry at them." He was asked: "O Spirit of God,<sup>826</sup> with whom should we associate?" He said: "With those whom God reminds you to visit and whose discourse increases your knowledge and whose behavior makes ye more eager for the Hereafter."

God Most High sent a revelation to the messenger David, saying: "O David, why dost thou flee the company of men and sit alone?" (David) answered: "O Lord God! My love for Thee has driven the thought of people out of my heart and I abhor them all." (God) said: "O David! Awaken and take the hands of thy brothers. Avoid whoever is not thy companion on the way of religion, for he darkens thy heart and distances (thee) from thy Me."<sup>827</sup>

Our Messenger (S) said: "God has an angel, one half of whom is fire, the other half snow. He says: 'O Lord God, as Thou hast thrown friendship between fire and snow, throw friendship between the hearts of Thine Own suitable servants.' And (the Messenger) said: "For those persons who have friendship for each other for the sake of God Most High, a red ruby column is set up on top of which are 70,000 pavilions. From there they will look down upon the inhabitants of heaven, and the light of their countenances will fall upon the inhabitants of heaven, like the light of the sun in this world. The people of heaven will say: 'Come, let us go to look at them.' They will see them clothed in green brocade. On their foreheads will be written *Those who love each other in God:*

<sup>826</sup> Spirit of God (*Rūhullāh*): An epithet for Jesus in Islamic discourse.

<sup>827</sup> "and distances (thee) from thy Me" (*manat*): following HK's vowelng. AA has no vowelng indicated, and the ligature could be read as *minnat*, in which case the phrase would be "and distances (thee) from favor." "Thy Me" (or, in some places, "thy I") is rare in English, but less uncommon in Persian. The "Me" of course refers to God, and in these words God is stressing His closeness to David.

They are the friends of God Most High." And Ibn Sammak<sup>828</sup> said at the time of his death: "O Lord God, Thou knowest that at the time I committed sins, I loved those who obeyed Thee. Make that the atonement for the other." And Mujahid<sup>829</sup> says: "When the lovers of God Most High smile at each other, just as leaves fall from a tree, so do their sins fall away from them."

### **DISCLOSING WHAT THE TRUE LOVE FOR GOD MOST HIGH IS**

Know that a friendship which happens with a person with whom one has been in the primary school, on a trip, in the academy, or in a neighborhood—and for those reasons friendship develops—is not of this kind. Nor is whomever thou lovest because he is of pleasant appearance, or whose speech is sweet of this kind. (The friendship) thou hast for anyone from whom thou receivest some dignity or property is also not of this kind, for all of these apply to the person who has no belief in God Most High or the Hereafter. Divine love is that which does not come about without faith, and this is of two degrees:

THE FIRST DEGREE is that thou lovest someone for some reason linked with him, but that motive is religious and for the sake of God Most High, as thou likest thy teacher because he teaches thee knowledge. That friendship is of a divine nature since thine aim for (acquiring) this knowledge is the Hereafter, not rank or wealth. If the object be the world, that friendship is not of that kind. If thou love thy student so that he learn from thee and may obtain the pleasure of God Most High through learning, (thou) obtainest the spiritual reward of teaching also. This is for the sake of God Most High. But if thou lovest (him) for the sake of dignity and retinue, it will not be of that kind. If a person gives voluntary charity and likes a person on the condition that he deliver that to the poor, or he invites some poor people and likes a person who prepares a good meal, then such friendship is for the sake of God. Indeed, if one likes someone and gives him bread and clothing to provide for him the leisure to worship (God), it is friendship for the sake of God, since his motive is the peace of mind for worship.

Many religious scholars and worshippers have had friendships with the rich and powerful for this reason. Both were counted as friends for the sake of God Most High. Moreover, if one loves his own wife because she keeps him from corruption and because of the bringing forth

<sup>828</sup> Ibn Sammak: Ibn Sammāk, Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad bin Ṣabīḥ. From Kufah, he was a preacher and an ascetic at the court of Harun al-Rashid. He died AH183/799-800CE.

<sup>829</sup> Mujahid (*Mujāhid*): Probably Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin Mūsā. He lived in Baghdad from AH245-6/859CE to AH324/936CE, had numerous pupils and assistants, and helped in the determination of the seven authorized modes of reading the Quran.

of children who will supplicate for him, such love is for the sake of God Most High and everything thou spendest for her is a voluntary charity. Indeed, if one loves his student for two reasons: one that he serves him and the other that he gives him the peace of mind to perform his worship, that part which is for worship is counted as love for the sake of God most High and there is spiritual reward for it.

THE SECOND DEGREE is greater. It is that one loves a person for the sake of God without having any expectations from him. Instead, it is by reason of obedience to God and for the love of Him that one loves the other. Moreover, because he is a servant of God and created by Him—such friendship is divine. It is greater, because this arises from the excess of one's love for God Most High, so much so that it reaches the boundaries of passionate love. Whoever is in love with someone, loves (that person's) district and neighborhood. He loves the walls of (that person's) house. Indeed, he loves the dog roaming the quarter's streets, and he likes that dog more than other (dogs). He is compelled to love the friend of his beloved, and beloved of his beloved, the people who obey the commands of his beloved, (the beloved's) servants, slaves, or relatives; all of these he loves out of necessity, for his love spreads to whatever has a relation with his beloved. As his love increases, so it increases with the others who follow and are connected with the beloved.

Therefore, whoever is overcome by love for God Most High to the boundaries of passionate love loves all of His servants, especially His friends. He loves all created things, for whatever (things) exist are all the signs of His devising and power. He is the beloved, and a lover loves the down on the cheek and the form of the beloved. The Messenger (S) honored and touched his eyes with the first fruits when they were brought to him, and he said: "The kinsman is a covenant with God Most High."

The love of God Most High is also of two kinds: some for the sake of the comfort of this world and the Hereafter, and others for the sake of God Most High (Himself). If nothing of the self is a consideration, then it is more complete. We shall explain this in the chapter on "Love" in the Fourth Pillar<sup>830</sup> of this work.

In summary, the strength of one's love for God Most High is in accordance with the strength of one's faith. The stronger one's faith, the more overwhelming one's love is. Then, it spreads to the friends of God and those favored with His esteem. If love were devoid of benefit, love for the dead—from the prophets, saints, and the religious scholars—would not take hold. The love for all is obtained in one's heart. So, whoever loves the learned, the Sufis, [the Alawis,]<sup>831</sup> the ascetics, and

<sup>830</sup> The Fourth Pillar, Chapter Nine.

<sup>831</sup> The Alawis, i.e., descendants of 'Ali ('Alawiyān): This is inserted in the HK edition but not found in the edition of Ahmad Aslam. The word, with a different vowelizing

their servants and devotees, loves them for the sake of God Most High. However, the amount of love is made known by their sacrifice of wealth and rank. There are people whose faith and love is so powerful that they hand over all of their wealth at once, as did Abu Bakr the Righteous (R). There are people who give one half of their wealth, as did 'Umar (R). And there are people who cannot afford to give more than a little. The heart of no believer is devoid of this love, even though it be weak.

#### **DISCLOSING WHAT ENMITY FOR THE SAKE OF GOD MOST HIGH IS**

Know that whoever loves those who obey (God) for the sake of God Most High must necessarily consider the unbelievers, the sinful, and the oppressive to be enemies for the sake of God Most High. For anyone who loves another is the friend of his (beloved's) friends and the enemy of his (beloved's) enemies. Those people are the enemies of God Most High. Consequently, if there be a sinful Muslim, one must love him for his being a Muslim and hold him as an enemy for his sinfulness. One must add the love and enmity together, just as when one rewards one of one's children while being harsh with and beating another. From one point of view, one loves the child; from another, one is its enemy. This is not impossible, for if a person has three children, one intelligent and obedient, another stupid and disobedient, and another stupid and obedient, the first he will love, the second he will dislike, and the third he will love from one aspect and dislike from another. The effect can be seen in behavior so that he honors one, berates the second, and holds the third between the two (extremes).

In summary, whoever sinfully opposes God Most High, should be treated in the same way that he does thee. Thou should oppose him according to his opposition to thee and thou shouldst be agreeable with him in accordance with his agreement with thee. This (attitude) should be reflected in speech, association, and dealings; so that to a rebel (against God), thou should offer a gloomy countenance and harsh speech, while with the person whose sin is greater, thou shouldst be gloomier. If he has passed all bounds, thou shouldst hold thy tongue and shun him. As for the unjust, thou shouldst be more excessive than for a sinner, except for the person who deprives thee of thy rights. In that case, forgiveness and patience are better.

The practice of the forefathers in this regard was various: Some were excessively harsh for the sake of the strength of religion and the administration of the Religious Law. Ahmad bin Hanbal was one of

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(*‘ulwīyān*) would mean metaphorically "angels" or "planets," but that would appear to be out of context as the list is of classes of human beings.

these. He became very angry with Harith Muhasibi<sup>832</sup> because he had written about theology and rejected the Mu'tazilite views.<sup>833</sup> (Ibn Hanbal) said: "In the books, thou explainest their flawed arguments and then repliest to them. It may be that some person read the flawed arguments and be influenced by them." Yahya Ma'in<sup>834</sup> said: "I do not want anything from anyone; however, if the king gives me something, I shall accept it." (Ahmad bin Hanbal) was enraged by this and refused to talk with him until he had apologized and said: "I was jesting and making a joke." (Ahmad) replied: "Thou eatest by religion; do not play with it."

There were others who looked upon all with forbearance, and this changed to intention and thought. A person whose perspective is the (absolute) Unity of God and who sees everything as compelled by the forceful grasp of the Supreme Being looks upon them with the eye of mercy. This, too, is great; but it is the place of the deception of fools, for there is the person who harbors fawning inside him and thinks it to be the Unity. The sign of the Unity is that if they beat him, carry off his property, hold him in contempt, and scold him, he will not be angered. He looks upon (his oppressor) with kindness, since he looks at everything from the (aspect) of (absolute) Unity and the compulsion of the creature, just as the Messenger (S) said when his tooth was broken (in battle) and blood was flowing over him: "*O God, guide my people for they do not know.*" When one is not silent for one's own sake, but is silent in the cause of God Most High, this is fawning, hypocrisy, and foolishness; Unity has not conquered him. That the sin of the sinner does not turn him into (the sinner's) enemy is evidence of the weakness of his faith and his love (for God), just as when a person insults thy friend and thou dost not grow angry. It is the proof that, in reality, there is not love (thy heart).

<sup>832</sup> Harith Muhasibi: Ḥārith bin Asad al-Muḥāsibī, a noted Sufi, theologian, Traditionist, and jurisprudent born in Basrah and died in Baghdad (AH243/857CE). He was the author of many books and an opponent of the Mu'tazilites. (*Al-Munjid*)

<sup>833</sup> Mu'tazilite views: The Mu'tazilites were a sect founded by Wāsil bin 'Atā about AH110/728-9CE. They rejected the eternal attributes of God, fearing that they would lead to a blurring of the oneness of God and were called "divestors," because they had divested God of His attributes. They held that the Quran was created, that God was not the creator of evil, and that man had a free will. They denied predestination. See the standard works on Islamic theology and philosophy.

<sup>834</sup> Yahya Ma'in: Yaḥyā bin Ma'īn bin 'Awn, Abū Zakariyā' al-Baghdādī. An authority on Religious Law and the Traditions, he died at al-Madinah AH233/847-8CE.

**EXCURSUS: [THE DEGREES OF ANGER AGAINST  
THE OPPONENTS OF GOD MOST HIGH]<sup>835</sup>**

Know that the degrees of the opponents of God Most High are various, and anger and intensity must vary with them:

*THE FIRST DEGREE* are the unbelievers. If they are warriors, then enmity with them is a religious obligation and dealing with them is by killing and taking as slaves.

*AT THE SECOND DEGREE* are the People of the Book.<sup>836</sup> Enmity with them is a religious obligation and the dealing with them is holding them in contempt, not honoring them, and making their way narrow. As for friendship with them, it is extremely repugnant, to the point of being forbidden, for God Most High says: *Thou wilt not find those believing in God and the Last Day loving those who oppose God and His Messenger.* (Q. 58:22) The Messenger (S) says: "Whoever believes in God Most High and the Resurrection will not befriend the enemies of God Most High." Moreover, granting them authority, sending them on missions, relying upon them, and putting them in charge of Muslims, is demeaning for Muslims and is one of the great sins.

*THE THIRD DEGREE* is the innovator,<sup>837</sup> a person who invites people to innovation (in religion). It is important to make plain (thy) enmity for him so that the people may despise him. It is preferable not to call him a Muslim and not to speak with him. One should not return his greeting, for when he invites, his evil is contagious. But, if he is of the common folk and does not propagandize, his affair is less serious.

*IN THE FOURTH DEGREE* is the rebel (against God), for in him there is sorrow for the people such as oppression, false testimony, capricious rule, satirical verse, backbiting, and causing disturbance amongst the populace. Turning away from such people and being severe with them is especially good. Friendship with them is extremely repugnant and approaches the degree of the unlawful—in evident religious opinion—but this does not come as an obligation.

*AT THE FIFTH DEGREE* is the person who drinks wine and engages in lewd behavior, but does not annoy anyone. His affair is easier, and kindness and counsel are to be preferred with him if there is hope that he will accept them. If not, one must turn away from him, but one should return his greeting and it is not proper to curse him. During the time of

<sup>835</sup> From the AA text.

<sup>836</sup> "the People of the Book" (*ahl-i dhimmat*): Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians living under the protection of Islam.

<sup>837</sup> "innovator" (*mubtadi'*): or, heretic. A person who has corrupted or distorted the faith. In Arabic, *bid'at* means: innovation, novelty, or heresy. The word itself can have either a positive or negative connotation, depending upon context. In a religious context, it is usually used negatively.

the Messenger (S), someone drank wine a few times and was punished by beating. One of the Companions cursed him, saying: "How long will his corruption endure?" The Messenger (S) forbade him, saying: "The devil is enough of an enemy for him; do not be the aide of the devil against him."

## PART TWO: CONCERNING THE RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS OF ASSOCIATION

Know that everyone is not suitable for association and friendship; rather, thou shouldst associate with a person who has three qualities:

THE FIRST QUALITY is that he be intelligent, for the companionship of a fool has no benefit and will end in aversion. The fool, when he wants to do thee a good turn, will do something foolish that will cause thee loss; but he will not realize it. It has been said: "Keeping one's distance from a fool is intimacy (with God) and looking at a the face of a fool is a mistake." The fool is he who does not know the reality of affairs and, when they are explained to him, does not comprehend.

THE SECOND QUALITY is a good nature, for there is no safety from the ill-natured. When that bad nature becomes active, it overturns thy rights without fear.

THE THIRD QUALITY is that he be righteous, for whoever is determined to commit sin does not fear God, and whoever does not fear God cannot be trusted. God says: *And follow not him whose heart We have made unmindful of Our remembrance and who follows his own inclinations.* (Q. 18:28) "Do not obey him whom We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and who is in pursuit of his own desires." If he be an innovator (in religion), one should keep one's distance from him, for his innovation may infect, or its evil touch (one).

There is no innovation worse than which has now appeared, for there is a group that says: "One must not judge God Most High's creatures and no one should be restrained from lewdness and sin, for we have no enmity with the creatures of God Most High and we do not have the audacity to have power over them." These words are the seed of Libertinism and the essence of atheism,<sup>838</sup> and this heresy is (even) greater. Of course, one should not mix with these people, for these are words that are of an agreeable nature. In their aid, Satan causes them to adorn the heart and they quickly entice one into Libertinism.

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<sup>838</sup> "Libertinism" (*ibāḥat*): See Note 165 above. "Atheism": *zandaqah*. See *zindiq* (atheist) in Note 671 above.

Ja'far Sadiq<sup>839</sup> (R) has said: "One must avoid association with five persons: one, the liar, for thou wilt always be deceived with him; then, the fool, for when he wants to help thee he will cause thee loss and not know it; the miser who takes the best part of thy time; the coward who will cause thee loss when thou art in need; and the lewd person who will sell thee for a morsel of food and may even sell thee for less than a morsel." He was asked: "What is that?" He answered: "The desire for a morsel of food." Junayd says: "I prefer the association of good-natured sinners to that of bad-natured reciters (of the Quran)."

Know that all of these qualities are infrequently found together, but thou must recognize (thy) motive for association. If that motive be friendship, seek a pleasant nature. If the motive be worldly, seek generosity and liberality. If the motive be religion, seek knowledge and asceticism. For each one, there are different prerequisites.

Know that people are of three kinds: some are like food; there is no escaping them. Others are like medicine; there are times when they are needed, and that is all. And some are like an illness; one never has need of them, but they afflict most people. One must treat them with consideration until one is rid of them. In summary, one should associate with the person who gets some religious benefit from thee and thou from him.

### DISCLOSING THE RIGHTS OF ASSOCIATION AND FRIENDSHIP

Know that when a covenant of brotherhood and association has been made, it resembles a marriage contract in that there are rights for (both parties). The Messenger (S) says: "The similitude of two brothers is that they are two hands washing each other." These rights are of ten kinds:

THE FIRST RIGHT is property. The highest degree is that one presents him his share and gives liberally, as has been revealed with respect to the Helpers:<sup>840</sup> *And they prefer (them) over themselves, even though poverty may afflict them.* (Q. 59:9) The second degree is that one keeps the other as he does himself and considers property between himself and the other jointly held. The lowest degree is that one regards him as one does one's slaves and servants. One comes to his aid and need with what one has in excess when something happens to him before being asked. When he makes a request, there is need of discussion. This

<sup>839</sup> Ja'far Sadiq; Ja'far bin Muhammad, see Note 662.

<sup>840</sup> "Helpers" (*Anṣār*): The supporters of the Prophet in Madinah who made the pact of brotherhood with the emigrants who had accompanied him when he migrated from Makkah. The Helpers became models of generosity and friendship.

is outside of the degree of friendship, for thought and care has left one's heart. It is ordinary association and there is no value for this.

'Utbah al-Ghulam<sup>841</sup> (R) had a friend. ('Utbah) said: "I need 4,000 dirhams." (The friend) said: "Come and take 2,000 dirhams." ('Utbah) declined and said: "Hast thou no shame? Thou claimest friendship for the sake of God and then dost not bestow the world?"

Some people defamed the Sufis to one of the caliphs. Swords were brought to slaughter all of (the Sufis). Abu al-Hasan Nuri<sup>842</sup> was among them. He went forward so that they would kill him first. The caliph asked: "Why hast thou done this?" He answered: "They are my brothers in religion. I wished to bestow my life upon them a few moments earlier." Said the caliph: "People who are like this cannot be killed." They were all set free.

Fath Mawsili<sup>843</sup> went to a friend's house when (the friend) was not at home. He told his (friend's) slave girl to bring a small chest, which he opened and took from it what he wanted. When (the friend) returned home that night and heard what the girl had done, he was so pleased that he set her free.

Someone came to Abu Hurayrah (R) and said: "I want to establish brotherhood between us." He replied: "Dost thou know what the rights of brotherhood are?" He answered: "No." (Abu Hurayrah) explained: "That thou not prefer thine own gold and silver over me." (The other) said: "I have not achieved that level." (Abu Hurayrah) said: "Then go, for this not suitable for thee."

Ibn 'Umar (R) says: "One of the Companions sent a roasted (sheep) head to someone. (The recipient) said: 'So-and so of my brothers takes precedence as he has a greater need,' and he sent it on to him. That person sent it to another brother, and so it went from hand to hand until it returned to him who had sent it first." There was a pact of brotherhood between Masruq<sup>844</sup> and Khaythamah;<sup>845</sup> both were in debt. One would pay off the loan of the other without his knowledge, and the other would pay off the other's loan without his knowledge.

The Commander of the Believers 'Ali (R) would say: "I prefer to give twenty dirhams to my brother than a hundred dirhams in voluntary

<sup>841</sup> 'Utbah al-Ghulam: 'Utbah bin Sallām al-Ghulām. An ascetic of Basrah who died AH167/783-4CE.

<sup>842</sup> Abu al-Hasan Nuri (Abū al-Hasan Nūrī): He was a disciple of Sari Saqati (see Note 763) and a prominent Sufi of his era. This would place him during the first half of the 3rd Islamic (9th CE) century.

<sup>843</sup> Fath Mawsili: Abū Nasr bin Sa'īd Fath al-Mawṣilī. A Mamluk slave, he became an ascetic and died AH221/835CE.

<sup>844</sup> Masruq: Masrūq bin al-Ajda<sup>2</sup>. He was one the circle of Ibn Mas'ud, an important Companion of the Prophet.

<sup>845</sup> Khaythamah: other than that he was associated with Masruq (see Note 844), no further information about him presently available.

charity to the poor." The Messenger (S) was in a thicket and picked two twigs for use as toothbrushes. One was straight, the other bent. One of the Companions was with him. (The Messenger) gave him the straight one and kept the bent one for himself. (The Companion) said: "O Messenger of God, this one is better, thou shouldst have it." (The Messenger) replied: "No, a person does not associate with another for an hour without asking about the right of association: Did he observe it or let it lapse?" He was referring to that right of association, which is bestowing. And he said: "No two people associate together in friendship that the one more beloved by God Most High is the friendlier."

THE SECOND RIGHT is giving aid for all (of one's brother's) needs before he asks and tells (one), and addressing those tasks with a happy and a smiling face. The practice of the forefathers was to go to the door of their friends' houses every day and ask of the residents: "Do ye need anything? Do ye need any firewood or bread? Salt or cooking oil?" They did thus and considered it important. They were grateful to be allowed to do these things.

Hasan Basri would say: "My brothers are dearer to me than my family and children, for they teach me religion, while family and children teach me the world." 'Ata<sup>846</sup> has said: "Seek out your brothers after three days. If they are ill, visit them. If they are busy, help them. If they have forgotten, remind them."

Ja'far bin Muhammad (R) says: "I hasten so that my enemy's need from me be accomplished, lest he be needful from me. What shall I do with respect to a friend?" Among the forefathers, there was a person who, when his brother died, took care of his family and children for forty years, in observance of the rights due because of association.

THE THIRD RIGHT is that of the tongue, which should always speak well with respect to the brethren. It should conceal their defects. If someone should talk about them in their absence, one should reply and suppose that (the brothers) are behind the wall listening, just as he would wish they would do on his behalf when he is absent. One should not flatter, and when another speaks, one should listen. One should not oppose and argue with him. One should not reveal his secrets, even after cutting off relations with him; for that is a reprehensible trait. One should keep quiet about his family, children, and goods. If someone reviles him, one should not relate that to him, for it may cause him sorrow; but if someone praises him, one should not hide it from him, for that would be envy. If he commits some fault with respect to one's rights, one should

<sup>846</sup> 'Ata: 'Atā al-Sulamī of Basrah, a man known for his piety and asceticism. He died in AH121/739CE; or 'Atā bin Yassār, a protégé of the Prophet's wife Maymunah. He was an authority on the Traditions. He died about AH95/713CE.

not complain, but forgive him and remember one's own faults with respect to obedience to God Most High, so that one ought not to be surprised that a person might commit a fault with respect to him. One should know that if one wants to search for someone in whom there is no defect and from whom no fault comes, one will not find him and one must resign from the association with mankind.

In the Traditions, it is related: "The believer is always seeking forgiveness and the hypocrite is always seeking faults." One must conceal ten sins with one good deed, for the Messenger (S) says: "Seek refuge with God from the bad companion who, when he sees some badness, makes it known, but when he sees some goodness, he conceals it." One must forgive every fault that can be forgiven and interpret it in the best way possible, and not bear suspicion, for bad thoughts are forbidden.

The Messenger (R) said: God Most High has made unlawful (to the believer) four things from (another) believer: (his) wealth, blood, honor, and that bad thoughts be held about him." And Jesus (A) says: "What shall I say about the person who sees his own brother sleeping and pulls back the hem of his garment, exposing his privates and leaving them naked?" They asked him: "O Messenger of God, who holds that to be lawful?" "He replied: "Ye do, who know the defects of a brother and disclose them and talk about them so that others may know them."

It has been said thus: "When thou wantest to make a friend of some one, make him angry. Then send some one secretly to him to talk about thee. If he discloses any of thy secrets, know that he is not fit to be a friend." And it has been said: "Associate with the person who knows whatever God Most High knows about thee and, just as God Most High conceals it, so he conceals it too." Someone told his friend a secret. He said: "Dost thou remember it?" The other said: "No, I have forgotten it." And it has been said: "Anyone who turns away in four situations is not worthy of friendship: at the time of satisfaction, at the time of anger, at the time of craving, and at the time of the lust of the carnal appetite; indeed, at such times and for such reasons he should not set aside thy rights."

'Abbas<sup>847</sup> said to his own son 'Abdullah<sup>848</sup> (R): "'Umar (R) considers thee close to him and is presenting thee to the elders. Beware that thou observe five things: disclose not any secret, bear no tales about anyone to him, tell him no lie, contradict not anything he commands thee, and he must never see any treachery or rebellion (in thee)."

<sup>847</sup> 'Abbas: The son of 'Abd al-Muttalib and the paternal uncle of the Prophet, he was the most celebrated of the Companions and was the ancestor of the 'Abbasid dynasty during which classical Islamic culture at Baghdad reached its zenith. He died in AH32/652-3CE.

<sup>848</sup> 'Abdullah: 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās, the son of 'Abbās bin 'Abd al-Muttalib, above.

Know that nothing ruins friendship more than disputing and contradiction at every word. The implication of rejecting the words of thy friend is that thou hast said that he is foolish and ignorant and that thou art intelligent and erudite. Thou hast considered thyself superior to him and have looked upon him with contempt. This is closer to enmity than love.

And the Messenger (S) says: "Do not contradict thy brother in what he says, and be not frivolous with him. Do not violate any promise thou hast made to him."

The great ones have spoken thus: "If thou sayest to thy brother 'Arise,' and he says 'How far?' he is not fit for association. Instead, he should arise and not ask." Abu Sulayman Darani says: "I had a friend. He would give me everything I wanted from him. One time I said: 'I need something.' He said: 'How much is necessary?' The sweetness of his friendship departed from my heart." In short, know that the support of love is agreement in everything that one may (properly) agree with.

THE FOURTH RIGHT is that one declare one's compassion and love in words. The Messenger (S) says: "*If one of you loves his brother, then let him inform him of that.*" Whoever loves someone must tell him. He said this so that a friendship for him may appear in the heart of the other too. Then, from the other side, his love will be doubled. Consequently, one must ask about his circumstances in words and show that one is the other's partner in joy and sorrow, that one considers the other's joy and sorrow as one's own joy and sorrow. When one calls him, one should use the best of names. If he has a (special mode of) address,<sup>849</sup> one should use that which the other likes more.

'Umar (R) said: "The love of thy brother is purified with three things: one is that thou address him by the best of names; that thou give him the salutation first; and that thou give him precedence in seating." These are of the nature of thy praising him in his absence and thy not sitting in the place that he prefers, just as thou extoldest his family and children and whatever is his. For this has a great effect in friendship and love. Thou shouldst thank him for every good thing he does for thee.

'Ali (R) says: "Whoever does not thank his own brother for a good intention, does not thank him for a good deed either." In his absence, one must aid him and refute bad allegations about him. One must consider him as one does one's self. It is a great unkindness (to the friend) to be silent when someone is saying bad things about one's friend in one's presence. It is as though one did not come to his aid when one

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<sup>849</sup> That is, if he prefers to be called by his nickname (*kunyah*) or pedigree (*nasab*), for example. See Translator's Preface on the formation of Arab names.

saw someone beating him. The wounds caused by words are even greater.

Someone says: "I never said anything about my friend that I did not suppose I could say in his presence and in his hearing, so I said that which I would have wanted him to hear." Abu Darda<sup>850</sup> (R) saw two cows tethered in a field. When one stood, the other did. He wept and said: "Brotherhood for the sake of God should be just like that; standing together and walking together in unanimity."

THE FIFTH RIGHT is that one teach him whatever he needs of knowledge or religion, for saving one's brother from the fire of hell takes precedence over the sorrow of the world. If he has learned, but not implemented that, one should counsel him and advise him. One should inspire him to fear God Most High. However, such counsel should be given in private so that it may be a mercy. Counseling in public is shaming him. Say what thou sayest with kindness, not harshly, for the Messenger (S) says: "(One) believer is the mirror of (another) believer." That is, he sees and knows his own defects and shortcomings in another. When thy brother speaks kindly with thee about thy defects in private, thou shouldst feel gratitude and not become angry. It is as though someone tells thee: "There is a snake or a scorpion in thy clothing. Be careful!" Thou wouldst not become angry for this, and thou wouldst express thy gratitude. All of the bad qualities in thee are like snakes and scorpions, but they will bite thee in the grave and the wounds will be on thy soul. That will be harder than the snakes and scorpions of this world, for their wounds are on the body.

'Umar (R) used to say: "God have mercy on that which brings my defects before me as a gift." When Salman went to him, ('Umar) said: "O Salman, tell me the truth, what hast thou seen or heard about my activities that has displeased thee?" (Salman) replied: "Please excuse me from talking about this." ('Umar) said: "There certainly is something." After much insistence, (Salman) said: "I heard that on thy dining cloth there were two loaves of bread at one time and that thou possessest two tunics, one for night and the other for the day." ('Umar) said: "There will no longer be a second of these things. Hast thou heard anything else?" (Salman) answered: "No."

Hudhayfah al-Mar'ashi<sup>851</sup> wrote a letter to Yusuf Asbat:<sup>852</sup> "I have heard that thou hast sold thy religion for two grains in the market to

<sup>850</sup> Abu Darda: Abū al-Dardā 'Uwaym bin Malik, of the Khazraji Helpers and one of the "People of the Bench" (*ahl-i suffah*) among the Companions of the Prophet. He was an important authority on the Quran and the Traditions. He died AH32/652CE.

<sup>851</sup> Hudhayfah al-Mar'ashi: Ḥudhayfah bin Qatādah al-Mar'ashi, an ascetic. The incident of his writing to Yusuf Asbat is also recorded in 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*'. He died AH207/822-3CE.

buy something. That person said the price was eight grains.<sup>853</sup> And thou saidst: 'Give it to me for six grains.' That person sold it to thee, and that indulgence was because he knew thee for thy religion and righteousness. Take off the veil of negligence from thy head and awaken from thy sleep. Know that I am not sure that whoever has acquired a knowledge of the Quran and then is eager for the world is not among the ridiculers of the verses<sup>854</sup> of God Most High.

Therefore, the sign of an eagerness for religion is that one be grateful for such things. God Most High says: *But ye love not good advisers.* (Q. 7:79) Among the attributes of liars and whoever does not like the adviser is the haughtiness and pride that overcomes their faith.

All of this is for the situation in which a person does not realize his own defects. If he knows them, one must advise him by allusions and one must not be direct. And if that defect should be some shortcoming with respect to thee, concealing and considering it thoughtlessness is better, on the condition that thy heart does not change with regard to the friendship. If it will alter that friendship, it is better to rebuke him in private than withdrawing (from him); but withdrawal is better than disparagement and censure.

Thine objective in association must be that thou refine thy nature by tolerating the brethren, not that thou have an expectation of some good from them. Abu Bakr Kattani<sup>855</sup> (R) says: "A man associated with me and my heart was heavy. I gave him something with the intention of relieving my heart of that weight. It was not relieved. I took him by the hand and brought him home and told him to place his foot on my face. He said: 'Of course. Take care!' I said: 'It must certainly be done thus.' He did that and the weight was lifted from my heart."

Abu 'Ali Rubati<sup>856</sup> says: "I became a companion of Abu 'Abdullah Razi<sup>857</sup> in the desert. He said: 'Am I to be the commander on this journey or thou?' I said: 'Thou.' He said: 'Thou must obey me in everything I say.' I said: 'I hear and obey.' He said: 'Bring me that sack.'

<sup>852</sup> Yusuf Asbat: Yūsuf bin Asbāt al-Shaybānī, an ascetic who died about AH195/811CE.

<sup>853</sup> "grains" (*habbah*): A *habbah* was one-eighth of a *dānak*, itself about .45 grams metric; a very small amount. Ghazzali uses *dānak*, which is translated here as "eight grains."

<sup>854</sup> "the verses" (*āyāt*): or, "the signs."

<sup>855</sup> Abu Bakr Kattani: Muḥammad bin 'Ali bin Ja'far al-Kattānī, Abū Bakr. An important ascetic and saint of the end of the first Islamic (c. 7th CE) century, mentioned in *Kashf al-Mahjub* and given a chapter in *Tadhkirat al-Awliya'*; he was called "the lamp of the Sacred Precinct" (*chirāgh-i ḥarām*). He knew Junayd and others.

<sup>856</sup> Abu 'Ali Rubati (Abū 'Alī Rubātī): No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

<sup>857</sup> Abu 'Abdullah Razi (Abū 'Abdullāh Rāzī): possibly a teacher of Traditions who taught Ibn Bari (d. AH582/1187CE) and Ibn Sa'dun amongst others. Given the date of his pupil Ibn Bari's death, Abu 'Abdullah would been a contemporary of Ghazzali, making this identification doubtful, although possible.

I brought it and he put our provisions, clothing, and whatever else we had into it and threw it over his shoulder. No matter how much I said: 'Give it to me so that thou not become tired.' He said: 'Did I not tell thee that the authority is mine? Be thou obedient.' The next night it rained. He remained on his feet all night holding a *gilim*<sup>858</sup> over me so that the rain would not fall on me. When I would speak about it, he would say: 'I am the commander. Obey thou me' to the point I said to myself that I wished I had not agreed to make him the commander."

THE SIXTH RIGHT is the forgiveness of errors and shortcomings. The great ones have said: "If a brother commits some shortcoming with respect to thee, ask thyself to make seventy excuses on his behalf. If thy self does not accept this, say to it: 'Thou art the ill-natured and base one, for thy brother has made seventy apologies and thou hast not accepted them!'"

If the shortcoming is of the kind that is counted as a sin against one, counsel him gently so that he may refrain from that. If he does not and insists, then ignore it. If he persists in this stubbornness, counsel him. If that does not avail, the Companions (R) are not of one mind about (what to do next). The school of Abu Dharr (R) holds that one must then cut oneself off from him, for he says: "I loved him for the sake of God Most High. Now I must have enmity with him for the sake of God Most High." But Abu Darda and a number of the Companions (R) have said: "One should not withdraw from him, for there is the hope that he may change. However, one should not form a friendship with such a person in the first place. But when it is done, it should not be cut off quickly." Ibrahim Nakha'i<sup>859</sup> (R) says: "Do not abandon thy brother for a sin he commits today; tomorrow he may refrain from it." In the Traditions, it is related that the Messenger (S) said: "Avoid the error of the learned one, but do not cut yourselves off from him. Hope that he will return quickly."

There were two brothers from among the great ones of religions. One became afflicted with a fondness for some creature. He said to the other brother: "My soul has become ill. If thou wish to cut the bonds of brotherhood, do so." (The other) said: "God forbid that I break off with thee for one sin." He swore to himself not to eat or drink so long as God Most High did not cure (his brother) of that. He did not eat for forty days and continuously supplicated (God). Then, he asked (his brother): "How are things?" He answered: "The same." He continued to be patient and

<sup>858</sup> *gilim*: a coarse cloth used as a garment or floor covering made of goat's hair or wool. Today it is more often woven of cotton and used as a floor covering.

<sup>859</sup> Ibrahim Nakha'i: Ibrāhim bin Yazid al-Nakha'i, Abū 'Umrān (or 'Ammār). An important jurisprudent of Iraq, he was noted for his piety and knowledge of the Traditions. He settled in Kufah and died AH95/713-4CE.

endure hunger until his body melted, until that time his brother came and said: "God Most High has accomplished (it) and the passion in my heart has turned to coldness." The other resumed eating and drinking.

Someone was asked: "Thy brother has turned aside from the way of religion and has fallen into sin. Why dost thou not break with him?" He answered: "He is in need of a brother today for he has stumbled. How can I withhold my hand from him? Indeed, I should take his hand so that I may deliver him from hell with kindness."

Among the Children of Israel, two friends were worshipping at the summit of a mountain. One came to the city in order to buy something, and his eye fell upon a prostitute. He fell madly in love with her and became helpless. He stayed together with her. After several days had passed, the other came in search of his friend and learned what had happened to him. He went to him. The man, out of shame, said: "I know thee not." The other said: "O brother, do not upset thyself, for I have never felt the compassion and love for thee that I now feel." He placed his hand on (his brother's) neck and kissed him repeatedly. When the (sinner) saw his compassion, he knew that he had not lost his regard. He rose up and repented, and they departed together.

So, the way of Abu Dharr is closer to soundness. However, the (way of Abu Darda) is gentler and more learned, a way (that leads) to his repentance. How can he be abandoned on the day of his need for his brethren? As for the aspect of religious law, when the pact of friendship has been made, it is like a blood relationship, and it is not proper that a blood relationship be cut off because of sin. It was for this God Most High said: *And if (thy kinsfolk) disobey thee, say: Lo! I am innocent of what they do.* (Q. 26:216) He said that if thy clan and relatives rebel against thee, Say: "I am free of their deeds." He did not say: "I am free of thee."

Abu Darda (R) was told: "Thy brother has committed a sin. Why art thou not his enemy?" He said: "I am the enemy of his sin, but he is my brother."

However, one should not accept such people as brothers in the first place. Brotherhood is not (just) not betraying one, but severing relations is a betrayal and the omission of a right (of brotherhood) that has been established.

Moreover, it is not a crime that if one commits some shortcoming with respect to thee, forgiveness is to be preferred. If he apologizes—even though thou knowest it to be false—it should be accepted. The Messenger (S) said: "The believer angers quickly and gladdens quickly." Abu Sulayman Darani said to his disciple: "If thou experience some oppression from a friend, do not censure him; for it may be that thou hear a word in the censure that is worse than the lapse." He said: "As I have tested this, that is what I have seen."

THE SEVENTH RIGHT is that thou should remember thy friend in thy supplications (to God), both in (his) lifetime and after (his) death. The same is true for his children and family. Just as thou supplicate for thyself, offer supplications for him; for in truth, that supplication is (also) for thyself. The Messenger (S) says: "(Whenever) someone supplicates for his brother in his absence, an angel says: 'It is for thee too.'" In another narrative, God Most High says: "I shall begin with thee." And he said: "The supplication (to God) on behalf of a friend in his absence is not rejected."

Abu Darda (R) says: "I mention seventy friends by name in the prostration. I supplicate for them all, one by one." It has been said: "The brother is he who is always mindful of thy heritage after (thy) death in (his) supplications. His heart is occupied (by the thought) about what is God Most High doing with thee."

The Messenger (S) says: "The dead person is like one who is drowning and his hands are striking out in all directions. He is waiting for the supplications of his children and family and friends (on his behalf). Those supplications of the living reach the graves of the dead like mountains of light." In the Traditions it is related that: "The supplications (of the living) are displayed to the dead upon trays of light. It is said: 'This is the gift of such-and-such a person.' (The dead) are as delighted as are the living at receiving a gift."

THE EIGHTH RIGHT is to guard one's faithfulness to friends. This means, first, that thou not neglect the families and children of thy friends after their death. An old woman went to the Messenger (S). He honored her. They were surprised at this. He said: "She came to us during the lifetime of Khadijah and honoring a pledge is a part of belief."

Another (type of) faithfulness is that one be compassionate with all those attached to the friend: children, apprentices,<sup>860</sup> and slaves. The effect of that in his soul will be greater than commiserating about him.

Another is that if one receive some rank, pomp, or position of authority, one retain the same humility which one had and not become haughty to one's friends.

Another faithfulness is that one preserve the friendship continuously and not cut it off for anything, for there is no work for Satan more important than inspiring dissension among the brethren, as God Most High says: *Surely Satan sows dissensions among them.* (Q. 17:53) Joseph<sup>861</sup> (A) said: "*After Satan had sown dissension between me and my brethren.*" (Q. 12:100)

<sup>860</sup> "apprentices" (apprentice = Per. *shāgird*): or "students."

<sup>861</sup> Joseph: the Biblical Joseph, the son of Jacob. In Arabic: *Yūsuf*.

Another faithfulness is that one not listen to anyone's impugning with respect to (the friend) and one consider (him) a slanderer.<sup>862</sup>

Another faithfulness is that one not befriend his enemies; rather, one should consider his enemies to be thine own enemies, for anyone who is someone's friend must be unfriendly to his enemies. If one befriends his enemy, such friendship is weak.

THE NINTH RIGHT is that ceremony be abandoned between you. One should be with his friend as though he were alone. If they regard each with ceremony, that friendship is deficient. The Commander of the Believers 'Ali (R) says: "The worst of friends is he who requires thee to apologize to him and to be ceremonious with him." Junayd (R) said: "I have seen many brothers, but I have never seen two brothers who stand on ceremony with each other but that one of them has some (moral) defect."

It has been said: "Live with the worldly with politeness, with the people of the Hereafter with knowledge, and with those who have spiritual knowledge as thou wishest."

A group of Sufis associated with one another on the condition that if one of them continually fasted or ate bread or spent the night asleep or spent the night in formal prayer, the others would not ask him why he was doing that. In summary, the meaning of friendship for God Most High is oneness. In oneness, there is no ceremony.

THE TENTH RIGHT is that one consider oneself to be lower than all of one's friends. One should not expect anything from them, nor hope for any consideration. One should attend to all of their rights. Someone came to Junayd saying: "Brothers have become scarce and unobtainable in these times." He said this several times. Junayd said: "If thou want someone to feed thee and share thy troubles, they are rare. But if thou want someone to feed and share his sorrow, there are many like that with me."

The great ones have said: "Whoever wants to think himself superior to his friends is sinful and they will become sinful with respect to him. If he thinks himself the same as they, both he and they will be unhappy. If he think himself below them, he will be at ease and sound, both he and they." Abu Mu'awiyah al-Aswad<sup>863</sup> said: "My friends are all better than I, for they give me precedence over themselves and consider me more learned."

<sup>862</sup> This "faithfulness" is not found in AA's text.

<sup>863</sup> Abu Mu'awiyah al-Aswad: Abū Mu'āwiyah al-Yamān al Aswad, an ascetic with connections to Tarsus and Basrah.

### PART THREE: CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF MUSLIMS, NEIGHBORS, RELATIVES, AND SLAVES

Know that the rights of each person are according to his nearness and there are degrees of nearness. Rights are according to the amount of those. The strongest tie is that of the brother for the sake of God whose rights have been discussed above. However, for the person with whom there is no friendship, but there is the relationship of Islam, there are also rights.

#### [THE RIGHTS OF MUSLIMS]

*THE FIRST RIGHT* is that one not like for another Muslim that which one does not like for himself. The Messenger (S) says: "The similitude of the Muslims is that they are like one body. When one part is troubled, all parts are made aware of that and are troubled." And he said: "Whoever desires to achieve freedom from hell when death finds him, it must find him upon the word of the Testimony of Faith,<sup>864</sup> and whatever he does not like done to him, he does not do to any other Muslim." Moses (A) said: "O Lord, who is more just among Thy servants?" (God) said: "The one who gives justice from himself."

*THE SECOND RIGHT* is that no Muslim be troubled by one's deeds or speech. The Messenger (S) asked: "Do ye know who is a Muslim?" They answered: "God and His Messenger know best." He said: "That person from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are at ease." They asked: "Who is a believer?" He said: "He with whom the Muslims are secure in their own bodies and property." They asked: "Then who is an emigrant?" He said: "That person who has left off bad deeds." And he said: "It is not lawful that a person trouble a single Muslim with a single glance. It is not lawful that one do something which worries or frightens a Muslim."

Mujahid (R) says: "God Most High throws itches and scabs upon the inhabitants of hell; they scratch until the bones appear. Then a herald calls:<sup>865</sup> 'What is that misery like?' They say: 'It is severe.' (The herald) says: 'This is for the pain ye caused the Muslims in the world.'" The Messenger (S) said: "I saw someone in going about heaven as he wished because he had cut down a tree that was in the path of Muslims, so that no one would be bothered by it."

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<sup>864</sup> "Testimony of Faith": *Al-Shahādah*.

<sup>865</sup> "a herald calls": following AA. HK has a plural, which would probably put the phrase into passive voice "it is called out (to them)."

**THE THIRD RIGHT** is that one not be arrogant with anyone, for God Most High holds the arrogant in enmity. The Messenger (S) said: "He revealed to me: 'Be humble so as not to be prideful with any person.'" It was for this that the Messenger (S) went to the widows and the poor to see to their needs. No one should look at another scornfully. It may be that the person is a friend of God Most High<sup>866</sup> and (the scorner) not know it, for God Most High conceals His saints so that no one may approach them.

**THE FOURTH RIGHT** is that one not listen to the words of any calumniator about any Muslim, for one must listen to the speech of the just, and the calumniator is a sinner. As it is related in the Traditions: "No calumniator will enter heaven." One must know that anyone who tells tales about another to thee, tells tales about thee to others. One must keep one's distance from him and consider him a liar.

**THE FIFTH RIGHT** is that one should not cut off talking with any acquaintance for more than three days. The Messenger (S) says: "It is not lawful to cut off conversation with a brother Muslim for more than three days." The best of them is the one offers a greeting first.

'Ikramah (R) says: "God Most High said to Joseph (A): 'I have made thy rank and name great because thou didst forgive thy brothers.'" In the Traditions, it is related: "Every bad thing thou sufferest from a brother increases nothing other than (thy) own stature."

**THE SIXTH RIGHT** is that one do good to everyone as much as one is able. One should not make a distinction between good and bad (persons), for it is related in the Traditions: "Do good with everyone thou art able to. If that person is not of that disposition, thou shouldst be so." In the Traditions, it is related: "The basis of intelligence, after faith, is showing friendship to people and doing good deeds to the chaste and the unchaste." Abu Hurayrah (R) says: "Whoever took the hand of the Messenger (S) to speak with him, he did not let go of it until other did. He would turn to whoever spoke with him and be patient until that person had finished speaking."

**THE SEVENTH RIGHT** is that one respect the elderly and have compassion for children, for the Messenger (S) says: "Whoever does not respect the aged and does not have compassion for children is not of us." And he said: "Honoring white hair is honoring God Most High." And he said: "No young person has shown respect for an elder but that God Most High has not prompted a youth to respect him during his time of old

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<sup>866</sup> "a friend of God Most High" (*wali-yi haqq-ta'ala*): that is, a saint.

age." This is the good news of a long life for whoever attains the good fortune of honoring the elders. It is the proof that he will reach old age to see its reward.

When the Messenger (S) returned from a journey, the children would be brought out to greet him. He would place a couple of them in front of himself on the animal he was riding and others behind him. They would brag to each other: "The Messenger (S) set me in front of himself and thee behind." When they brought infants to him so that he might name them and supplicate God (for them), he would take them beside him, and it would (sometime) happen that the infant would urinate. (The parents) would cry out and make to take the child from him, but he would say: "Let him finish; do not stop him." Then he would not wash himself in front of the parent so as not make them feel bad. He would wash after they had left. If the boy were small, he would sprinkle water (on the spot) and not wash it.<sup>867</sup>

*THE EIGHTH RIGHT* is that one be pleasant and candid with all Muslims and have a smiling face for all. The Messenger (S) said: "God Most High loves the pleasant and the courteous." And he said: "A good deed which results in forgiveness is very easy: (having) a pleasant countenance and a pleasant tongue."

Anas Malik (R) says: "A helpless woman came to the Messenger (S) while he was walking and said: 'I have some business with thee.' He said: 'Take a seat wherever thou wantest in this lane so that I may sit with thee.' Then she went to the lane opposite and sat until she had said all (to him)."

*THE NINTH RIGHT* is that no promise to a Muslim should go unfulfilled. In the Traditions, it is related: "There are three things in every hypocrite, even though he performs the obligatory formal prayers and keeps the fast: lying when speaking, breaking promises, and betraying trust."

*THE TENTH RIGHT* is that one should reverence a person according to his degree. Whoever is dearer, one should hold him dearer amongst people. It may be that as he has fine clothing, a horse, and retinue, one know by that that he is more revered.

'Ayishah (R) was on a journey. They spread the dining cloth. A poor man passed by. She said: "Give him a loaf of bread." A rider passed by. She said: "Call him." They said: "Thou didst let the poor man pass on and invite the rich man?" She said: "God Most High has given every person a degree. We too must observe the rights of that degree. The poor

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<sup>867</sup> This last sentence is not found in AA's text.

man was made happy with a loaf, but it would be unseemly to do the same with an important person. We must do that which will make him happy."

In the Traditions, it is related: "When the cherished one of a people comes to you, honor him." There was a person to whom the Messenger (S) gave his own cloak for him to sit upon. An old woman who had given him milk came to him and he sat her upon his own cloak and said to her: "Welcome, Mother! Do me a kindness and ask of me what thou will so that I may give it to thee." Then, he presented her with a portion of the war-booty that had come to him. She sold it to 'Uthman (R) for 100,000 dirhams.

*THE ELEVENTH RIGHT* is that one try to make peace between any two Muslims who are angry with each other, for the Messenger (S) said: "Shall I tell you that which is more meritorious than formal prayer, fasting, and giving voluntary charity?" They said: "Tell us." He said: "Making peace among the Muslims."

Anas (R) says: "One day the Messenger (S) was sitting and laughing. 'Umar (R) said: 'May my father and mother be thy sacrifice! What art thou laughing about?' He said: 'Two men of my nation are kneeling before the Lord of Glory at the Resurrection asking for judgment between them. One says: 'O Lord God! He has done me a wrong. Take my right from him.' God Most High says: 'Give him his due.' (The other) says: 'O Lord God! All of my good deeds have been carried away by my adversaries. I have nothing left.' God Most High says to the injured party: 'Now what should he do? He has no good deed to give thee.' He says: 'O Lord God! Transfer my sins to him.' So his sins were placed upon the other, but there were still sins left.' At that point the Messenger (S) broke into tears and said: 'That is a tremendous day on which everyone will have need to have his burden taken from him.'

"Then, God Most High says to the injured man: "Look up! What dost thou see?" He says: "O Lord, I see cities of silver and I see palaces of gold adorned with precious stones and pearls." (The man) continues: "For which Messenger (of God), righteous person, or martyr can they be?" God Most High says: "One buys them and gives the price." He asked: "O Lord, who can pay the price for that?" (God) says: "Thou!" He says: "O Lord God, with what?" (God) says "With thy forgiveness of this brother." He says: "O Lord God, I forgive him." (God) says: "Arise! Take his hand and enter Paradise, both of you together!"

"Then the Messenger (S) said: 'Fear God Most High and make peace amongst Muslims.'"

*THE TWELFTH RIGHT* is that one should conceal the defects and the private affairs of Muslims, for it is related in the Traditions: "Anyone

who holds a veil over a Muslim in this world, God Most High holds a veil over his sins at the Resurrection.”

Abu Bakr Siddiq (R) says: “Whomever I arrest, whether a thief or a wine-drinker, I desire God Most High to cloak that sin from him.”

The Messenger (S) said: “O ye who have come to faith, but that faith has not yet entered your hearts, do not talk evil behind people’s backs and do not investigate their private affairs. Whoever exposes the private affairs of a Muslim, God Most High makes his private affairs turn into his disgrace, even if it is inside a house.”

Ibn Mas’ud (R) says: “I remember that the first person caught for theft was brought to the Messenger (S) so that his hand be cut off. The Messenger’s (S) face paled. They said: ‘O Messenger of God, does this business displease thee?’ He said: ‘Why should it not? Why should I be Satan’s helper in the enmity of my brethren? If ye want God Most High to forgive and conceal your sins, ye too conceal the sin of your Muslim brother, for when it reaches the ruler there is no remedy except the execution of the proscribed punishment.’”

‘Umar Khattab (R) was on patrol one night. He heard singing. He went up on the roof and entered that house. When he went down, he saw a man, a woman sitting with him, and wine. He said: “O enemy of God, didst thou suppose that God Most High would conceal such a sin for thee?” He replied: “O Commander of the Believers, do not reprove me, for if I have committed one sin, thou hast committed three. God Most High says to thee: *And do not spy*, (Q. 49:12) and thou hast spied; and He has said: *And go to houses by the gates thereof*, (Q. 2:189) and thou camest in from the roof; and He said: *Enter not houses other than your own without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof*. (Q. 24:28) He has said: “Do not go without permission into anyone’s house, and greet them.” Thou didst enter without permission and did not greet me.” ‘Umar (R) said: “If I forgive thee, wilt thou repent?” He replied: “I shall, if thou forgivest me, I shall never return to this.” So ‘Umar forgave him and he repented.

The Messenger (S) said: “On the Day of Resurrection molten lead will be poured into the ears of whoever turns his ear to listen to the conversation of people not being addressed to him.”

**THE THIRTEENTH RIGHT** is that one keep away from accusations so that the hearts of the Muslims may be protected from suspicion and their tongues from talebearing. For, whoever becomes the cause of the sin of another is a partner in that sin. The Messenger (S) says: “How can it be that a person curse his own mother and father?” They said: “Who does that, O Messenger of God?” He said: “Whoever curses the mother and father of another so that they are prompted to curse thy mother and father. That curse has (in reality) been given by him.”

'Umar Khattab (R) says: "Whoever stands at a place of accusation has no (right) to blame the person who has a bad opinion about him."

The Messenger (S) was in the mosque talking with Safiyah at the end of Ramadan. Two men passed by him. He called them and said: "This is my wife, Safiyah." They said: "O Messenger of God, even if people will be suspicious of a person, they will not be suspicious of thee." He said: "Satan moves in the body of a person as blood does in the veins."<sup>868</sup>

'Umar (R) saw a man who was talking with a woman on the road. He beat him with a scourge. The man said: "This my own wife!" 'Umar said: "Why dost thou not talk with her in a good place where no one sees?"

**THE FOURTEENTH RIGHT** is that if someone has an office, he should not refuse any just due of any person. The Messenger (S) said to the Companions: "Request something from me, for I feel in my heart that I want to give. I shall delay until one of you intercedes so that he have the reward. Intercede so that ye may obtain spiritual reward." And he said: "There is no voluntary charity more meritorious than the charity of the tongue." They asked: "How is that?" He said: "The intercession by which an (accused) murderer remains innocent, or someone benefits, or some trouble is lifted from a person."

**THE FIFTEENTH RIGHT** is that when one hears someone censure a Muslim and harbors designs against his life, or his property, in his absence. One should be the helper of that absentee in reply and the prevention of those injustices to him. The Messenger (S) says: "There is no Muslim who aids another Muslim when they are saying ugly things about him and disrespecting him that God Most High does not aid him when he is more needful. There is no Muslim who omits aid and does not offer opposition (to the injustice to another Muslim) to whom God Most High does not give a loss in a place which he loves more."

**THE SIXTEENTH RIGHT** is that when one is afflicted with the company of a bad person, one should be courteous and civil until one can be free of him. One should not be harsh with him face to face. Ibn 'Abbas (R) says in the interpretation of the verse '*and they repel evil with good*' (Q. 13:22) that ye should meet curses with "peace" and civility.

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<sup>868</sup> The Prophet called the men and told them that Safiyah was his wife lest they think, even though they knew him to be the Messenger of God, that he was having a conversation with a woman not of the prohibited degrees (*nā mahram*).

‘Ayishah (R) says: “A man wanted permission to see the Messenger (S). He said: ‘ Give him permission, for he is a bad man among his own people.’ When he came, (the Messenger) was so considerate and polite to him that I thought that he had some honor for him. When he left, I said: ‘Thou saidst that he was a bad man, but thou wert very considerate with him.’ He replied: ‘O ‘Ayishah, the worst of men to God Most High at the Resurrection is the person who is shown consideration out of fear of his evil.’”

It is related in the Traditions that: “That by which thou retainest thine own honor from the tongue of a detractor is voluntary charity.” Abu Darda (R) says: “There are many people at whom we smile but whom we curse in our hearts.”

*THE SEVENTEENTH RIGHT* is that one have association and friendship with the poor and avoid sitting with the powerful. The Messenger (S) said: “Do not sit with the dead.” They asked him: “Who are they?” He replied: “The powerful.”

Wherever Solomon (A) saw a poor and humble person in his kingdom, he would sit with him and say: “A poor and humble person is sitting with a poor and humble person.” Jesus (A) preferred to be addressed: “O poor and humble one!” more than by any other name.

Our Messenger (S) said: “O Lord God! As long as Thou keepest me alive, keep me poor and humble. When Thou causest me to die, cause me to die poor and humble. When Thou gatherest me, gather me with the poor and humble.” Moses (R) said: “O Lord God! Where should I seek Thee?” He answered: “With the broken-hearted.”

*THE EIGHTEENTH RIGHT* is that one should endeavor to gladden the heart of a Muslim and provide for his needs. The Messenger (S) says: “For whoever takes care of the need of a Muslim, it is as though he has served God Most High for all his life.” And he said: “At the Resurrection, God Most High brightens the eye of whoever brightens the eye of believer.” And he said: “Going to attend to the need of a Muslim for an hour, day or night, whether the need be met or not, it is better for one than sitting in seclusion in a mosque for two months.” And he said: “God Most High bestows seventy-three forgivenesses upon whoever gives comfort to the sad or delivers an oppressed person.” And he said: “Aid thy brother, whether he is an oppressor or oppressed.” They asked: “How should we aid an oppressor?” He replied: “God Most High does not love any act of obedience more than gladdening the heart of a Muslim.” And he said: “There are two qualities which no act of worship surpasses: accepting the faith and seeking the satisfaction of people.” And he said: “Whoever has no concern for the Muslims is not one of them.”

Fudayl (R) was seen weeping. He was asked: "For what art thou weeping?" He replied: "Because of the distress I feel for the wretched Muslim who did me an injustice. What will happen to him tomorrow when he is questioned at the Resurrection? He will be disgraced and will have no excuse or argument."

Ma'ruf Karkhi<sup>869</sup> (R) says: "The name of whoever repeats three times '*O God, correct the people of Muhammad! O God, have mercy upon the people of Muhammad; O God, comfort the people of Muhammad,*' will be recorded among the saints."<sup>870</sup>

**THE NINETEENTH RIGHT** is that one greet whomever one meets with "Peace" (*salām*) before conversing with him and that one take his hand. The Messenger (S) said: "Do not reply to whoever opens conversation before greeting with 'Peace' until he does that first." A person went to the Messenger (S) and did not greet him with 'Peace.' He told him: "Go out and re-enter and greet with 'Peace.'"

Anas (R) says: "After I had served the Messenger for eight years, he said: 'Anas, make thorough ablutions so that thy life may be long; greet whomever thou meetest with "Peace" so that thy good deeds may be many; and when thou enterest a house, greet its inhabitants with "Peace" so that there be much goodness in thine own house.'"

A person came to the Messenger (S) and said: "*Peace be upon you.*" He said: "They are recording ten good deeds for him." Another entered and said: "*Peace be upon you and the mercy of God.*" And he said: "They are recording twenty good deeds for him." Another entered and said: "*Peace be upon you and the mercy of God and His blessings.*" And he said: "They are recording thirty good deeds for him."

And the Messenger (S) said: "When ye enter some place, say 'Peace.' When ye leave, also say 'Peace.' The first is not more important than the last." And he said: "When two Muslims take each other's hands, seventy mercies are divided between them: sixty-nine for the person who smiles more and is more pleasant. When two Muslims meet and exchange the greeting of 'Peace,' one hundred mercies are divided between them: ninety for him who greeted first and ten for him who replied."

<sup>869</sup> Ma'ruf Karkhi: Ma'rūf bin Firuz al-Karkhi, Abū Mahfūz. He was born near Wasit in central Iraq, his parents were Christians. He converted to Islam and became a famous mystic, living in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad; hence his sobriquet. He died AH200/815-16CE.

<sup>870</sup> "saints": *abdāl*, literally, "substitutes." The seventy righteous persons by whom God Most High sustains the existence of the world.

Kissing the hands of the great ones of religion is a practice of the Prophet. Abu ‘Ubaydah Jarrah<sup>871</sup> kissed the hand of ‘Umar Khattab. Anas (R) says: “I asked the Messenger (S): ‘When we meet each other, should we bow?’ He said: ‘No.’ I said: ‘Should we shake hands?’ He said: ‘Yes.’”

As for kissing the cheek and embracing upon the return from a journey, they are practices of the Prophet. However, the Messenger (S) disliked the rising to one’s feet (when some one comes). Anas (R) says: “I never loved any person more than (the Prophet), and I did not rise to my feet for him, as I knew he disliked that.”

So, if someone shows respect to another on the road—a place where this has become the custom—there is nothing to fear. However, rising to one’s feet in front of someone is interdicted. The Messenger (S) said: “Say to whoever likes people to stand before him while he is seated, ‘Take thy proper place in hell.’”

*THE TWENTIETH RIGHT* is that when some one sneezes one should say: “*Praise be to God!*” Ibn Mas‘ud (R) says: “The Messenger (S) taught us that when someone sneezes one should say: *Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!*” After saying this, the person hearing it says: ‘*May God have mercy upon thee,*’ or: ‘*May thy Lord have mercy upon thee.*’ And when this has been said, the other says: ‘*May God forgive me and you.*’ And if a person does not say: ‘*Praise be to God!*’ he does not merit the ‘*May God have mercy upon thee.*’”

When the Messenger (S) was about to sneeze, he would keep the sound down and cover his mouth with his hand. If a person sneezes in the lavatory, he must say: “*Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds*” to himself.<sup>872</sup> Ibrahim Nakha‘i said: “Should ye say it (aloud), there is no fear (that it would be a sin).”

Ka‘b Ahbar says that Moses (A) said: “O Lord, art Thou close so that I should whisper, or art Thou distant so that I should call out?” He said: “Wherever thou rememberest me, I am beside thee.” (Moses) said: “O Lord God, we have states such as impurity and elimination, should we remember Thee in such situations?” He answered: “In whatever state thou art, remember Me and fear not.”

*THE TWENTY-FIRST RIGHT* is that one should visit the sick among one’s acquaintances, even if he is not a friend. The Messenger (S) said: “Whoever visits a sick person will sit in the middle of Paradise. When he

<sup>871</sup> Abu ‘Ubaydah Jarrah: Abū ‘Ubaydah bin Jarrāḥ, Ḩāfiẓ bin ‘Abdullāh. An early convert to Islam and a Companion of the Prophet, he was the governor of Syria during the caliphate of ‘Umar bin Khattab. He died AH18/639CE.

<sup>872</sup> That is: not audibly.

returns (from the visit), 70,000 angels are charged to send him blessings until nightfall."

It is a practice of the Prophet to put one's hand on the hand of the ailing person, or upon his forehead, and to ask him how he feels and to say: "*In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. I place thee under the protection of God, the One, the Eternal, Who does not beget nor is He begotten and for Whom there is none comparable to Him, from the evil that afflicts thee.*" 'Uthman (R) said: "I was sick. The Messenger (S) came and said that to me several times."

It is the practice for the sick person to say: "*I seek refuge with the might of God and His power from the evil which afflicts me and I am on my guard.*" When someone asks him how he is, he should not be complaining.

In the Traditions, it is related that when a servant (of God) becomes ill, God Most High appoints two angels over him so that when someone comes to visit him, (an angel) thanks him, and if (the sick person) complains, (an angel) says: "*It will be well, praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.*" God Most High says: "I am responsible for My servant. If I take him, I shall take him to My mercy and transport him to Paradise. If I restore his health, I shall make this illness an atonement for his sins and grant him flesh and blood better than what he had before."

'Ali, may God ennable his visage, says: "Whoever has a stomach ache should ask for something from his own wife's dower portion<sup>873</sup> and buy some honey with that. He should mix it with rainwater and he will get well, for God Most High has called rain blessed, honey a remedy, and the dower given to women *wholesome and salubrious*, that is, sweet and easy of digestion, so that when all three things come together, a cure is certain."

In summary, the rules of conduct for the sick person are that he not complain and be anxious. He should hope that his illness shall atone for his sins. When he takes medicine, he should put his trust in the Creator, not in the medicine. And the etiquette for the visitor, it is that he not stay overlong and not ask many questions. He should supplicate God for (the sick person's) restored health. He should show that he is unhappy because of the illness, and refrain from looking at the rooms and doors in (the sick person's) house. When he arrives at the door of the house, he should seek permission (to enter) and not stand around in front of it. Instead, he should stand to one side and knock on the door gently. He should not shout: "Boy!" And if he is asked who he is, he should not reply: "It is I." Instead of that, he should say: "*Glory be to God and praise be to God!*" Whoever knocks at the (sick person's) door should do likewise.

<sup>873</sup> "dower portion" (*kābin*): see Notes 703 and 1380.

**THE TWENTY-SECOND RIGHT** is that one should follow a corpse (to the grave). The Messenger (S) says: "For whoever follows a corpse there is a carat<sup>874</sup> of reward. If he stands while they shroud him, two carats. Each carat is several times the size of Mount Uhud."<sup>875</sup>

As for the etiquette of accompanying a bier (to the graveside), one should remain silent, not laugh, and occupy oneself with the lesson (of dying) and reflect upon one's own death. A'mash<sup>876</sup> says: "I was walking behind a funeral bier not knowing who I was mourning; for each one was more sorrowful than the other." Some people were grieving over a corpse. One of the elders said: "Grieve for yourselves, for he has put three terrors behind him: he has seen the appearance of the Angel of Death, he has experienced the bitterness of giving up his life, and has passed beyond the fear of the end."

The Messenger (S) said: "Three things follow a corpse: family, property, and deeds. The family and property return, but his deeds remain with him."

**THE TWENTY-THIRD right** is that one should visit graves and supplicate for (the dead) and take a lesson from them. One should know that they have preceded one and that one must also soon go. One's place will be like their graves. Sufyan Thawri (R) says: "Whoever remembers the graves often will find his own grave a garden from among the gardens of Paradise. Whoever forgets them will find a cavern of the caverns of hell."

Rabi Khuthaym, whose grave is at Tus,<sup>877</sup> was a great one of the Followers.<sup>878</sup> He had dug a grave in his own house. Whenever he was displeased with himself, he would sleep in that grave and stay there for some time. Then he would say: "O Lord, sent me (back) to the world so that I make up for my shortcomings." Then he would rise up and say: "Behold, O Rabi! He has returned thee! Try to make it so that He does not have to return thee more than one time!"

'Umar (R) with him, says that the Messenger (S) went to a cemetery and sat at the head of a grave weeping copiously. "When I came nearer to him, I said: 'Why art thou weeping, O Messenger of

<sup>874</sup> "carat" (*qīrāt*): a weight equal to half a *dānag* or four grains. Here, it is not being used literally.

<sup>875</sup> Mount Uhud: A hill near Madinah famous for a victory gained there over the Quraysh in AH3.

<sup>876</sup> A'mash: Abū Muḥammad Sulaymān bin Mihrān al-A'mash, a famous scholar of Kufah. He died AH148/765.

<sup>877</sup> Tus (*Tüs*): Once a great city of Khorasan, now a suburb of Mashhad in northeastern Iran. Ghazzali is buried there.

<sup>878</sup> Rabi Khuthaym, or Khaytham: An early ascetic. That Ghazzali calls him one of the Followers (*tābi'īn*), one of the generation following the Companions, places him perhaps in the second half of the 1st Islamic (7th CE) century.

God?' He said: 'This is the grave of my mother. I sought permission from God Most High to visit (her grave) and ask for her forgiveness. He gave me permission for the visit, but not for the supplication. Filial compassion welled up in my heart and I wept for her.'

This is a summary of the rights of Muslims that should be observed only for Muslims.

#### [THE RIGHTS OF NEIGHBORS]

As for the rights of neighbors, there are many. The Messenger (S) said: "There is a neighbor who has one right: he is an unbeliever. There is the neighbor who has two rights: he is a Muslim. There is the neighbor who has three rights: he is a Muslim relative." And he said: "Gabriel (A) has always counseled me about the rights of neighbors, to the point that I supposed they would inherit from me." And he said: "Say to whoever believes in God and the Day of Resurrection: 'Hold thy neighbor dear.'" And he said: "A person is not a Muslim whose neighbor suffers from him or is not safe from him." And he said: "The first of two judgments at the Resurrection shall be with the neighbor." And he said: "Whoever throws a stone at his neighbor's dog gives offense to him."

The Messenger (S) was told: "Such-and-such a woman fasts by day and spends her nights in formal prayer, but she annoys her neighbor." He said: "Her place is in hell." And he said: "Thy neighbors are those to the fortieth house."<sup>879</sup> Zuhri<sup>880</sup> (R) says: "Forty houses to the right, forty houses to the left, forty houses to the front, and forty houses to the rear."

Know that a neighbor's right is not only that thou not trouble him, but that thou must also do good to him. It is related in the Traditions: "At the Resurrection, the poor neighbor shall contend with the rich man, saying: 'O Lord God! Ask him why he did no good deed for me and why he closed the door of his mansion against me?'"

One of the saints was bothered by a multitude of mice. He was asked: "Why dost thou not have a cat?" He said: "I fear that mice will hear his meowing and flee to my neighbor's house. How can I like for my neighbor that which I dislike for myself?"

The Messenger (S) said: "Dost thou know what the right of the neighbor is? It is that if he asks thee for help, thou helpest him. If he wants a loan, thou givest it to him. If he is poor, thou aidest him. If he is sick, thou visitest him. If he dies, thou followest his bier (to the grave). If some pleasing thing comes to him, thou congratulatest him. If he is

<sup>879</sup> That is, to the distance of the fortieth house from one's own house.

<sup>880</sup> Zuhri: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri. An important narrator of Traditions of the second generation, the Followers. He was born in Madinah and lived in Syria. He died AH124/742CE.

touched by some sorrow, thou commiseratest with him. Do not build the wall of thy compound high so that it blocks the way of the breeze and the sun against him. When eating fruit, send him some. If thou cannot, then eat in seclusion. Thou should not approve of thy child taking (some food) in his hand and going outside so that (thy neighbor's) children see what he has in his hand. Thou dost not trouble him with the smoke from thy kitchen except when thou sendest him some of the food thou hast prepared." And he said: "Dost thou know what the right of the neighbor is? By that God in Whose Hand of Power and Command is the life of Muhammad, one does not do justice to rights of neighbors except that person upon whom God Most High has had mercy."

Know that among his rights, one is that thou dost not look down into his house from thy rooftop. If he puts one end of a beam against thy wall, do not forbid him. Thou should not block the way of his waterspouts. If he throws some dirt in front of the door of thy house, do not do battle with him. Whatever thou learnest about his private affairs,<sup>881</sup> thou must keep to thyself and not whisper about him. Thou shouldst keep thine eyes off the women of his household. Thou shouldst not let thy gaze linger on his slave girl. All of this is over and above the rights with respect to Muslims that we have (already) said must be observed.

Abu Dharr Ghaffari (R) says: "My friend the Messenger (S) advised me: 'When thou art cooking, add some water and send some of it to thy neighbor.'"

Someone asked 'Abdullah Mubarak (R): "My neighbor complains about my young male slave. If I beat him without proof, I shall become a sinner. If I do not beat him, my neighbor will be upset. What should I do?" He said: "Wait until thy slave does something stupid deserving punishment. Delay that punishment until thy neighbor complains again, then punish (the slave) so that thou will have observe the rights of both at the same time."

#### THE RIGHTS OF RELATIVES

Know that the Messenger (S) said: "God Most High says: 'I am Compassionate and a relative is kin. I have derived their name from My Own Name.'<sup>882</sup> I am joined to whoever is joined to his folk; I am cut off

<sup>881</sup> "private affairs" (*'awrāt*): The word could refer to his women, private parts, or deficiencies. As used in Persian, the most common meaning is the private parts and women, and in Arabic, the private parts or weakness. The Arabic root *'-w-r* implies defectiveness and alternation.

<sup>882</sup> A play on words. In Arabic, the root for "mercy" is *r-h-m*. *Rahmān* is an intensive form meaning being compassionate, merciful. *Rahim* or *riḥm*, from the same root means

from whoever cuts himself off from them." And he said: "To whosoever wishes to lengthen his life and to expand his sustenance, say: 'Do good by thy relatives.'" And he said: "There is no act of devotion (to God) with more spiritual reward than (honoring) the bond of kinship, even if they are of a house engaging in sin and corruption, but by observing this kinship, their property increases from that (connection) in its blessedness." And he said: "There is no voluntary charity more meritorious than that which thou givest to relatives who are inimical to thee."

Know that the connection of kinship is that when they cut themselves off from thee, thou adherest to them. The Messenger (S) said: "The best of all the virtues is that thou adhere to whoever cuts himself off from thee, that thou give to whoever deprives thee, and that thou pardon whoever does some injustice to thee."

#### THE RIGHTS OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

Know that their rights are greater because they are nearer. The Messenger (S) said: "No person has done justice to the rights of a father until he is like a slave: (the father) buys (him) and sets (him) free." And he said: "Doing good to one's mother and father is superior to formal prayer, fasting, the Greater Pilgrimage, the Lesser Pilgrimage, and fighting in a religious war." And he said: "He smells the fragrance of Paradise from the distance of a journey of five hundred years who is not cursed by his parents or cut off from kinship.

God Most High revealed to Moses (A): "I shall record whoever obeys his mother and father as obedient. I shall record whoever obeys Me and does not obey them as disobedient."

Said the Messenger (S): "What loss is there if a person gives voluntary charity as payment for his dead parents so that they will have the reward and nothing will be lost from his reward?" Someone came to the Messenger (S) and said: "I have a dead mother and father. What obligations remain upon me that I should perform for them?" He said: "Perform formal prayers on their behalf and seek forgiveness and execute their testament. Hold their friends dear and be good to their relatives." And he said: "The rights of a mother are twice those of a father."

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"uterus, womb." One of the highest degrees of kinships is being born from the same womb. In this sense, it has acquired the more general meaning of relationship, kinship.

### THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Know that someone asked the Messenger (S): "To whom should I do good?" He said: "Thy mother and father." (The man) said: "They are dead." (The Messenger) said: "Thy children, for just as a father has rights, so does a child."

One of the rights of a child is that one not let him be rebellious by his own ill-nature. The Messenger (S) said: "God Most High will have mercy on the father who restrains his son's disobedience."

Anas (R) says that the Messenger (S) said: "Cut the hair of a boy when he is seven days old and give him a good name and clean him. When he is six years old, ye train him. When he is seven years old, ye command him to perform the formal prayers. When he is nine years old, ye separate his night clothes. When he is ten years old, ye discipline him for (missing) a formal prayer. When he is sixteen years old, his father should give him a wife, take his hand, and say: 'I have corrected thee, I have taught thee to read the Quran; I have given thee a wife; I take refuge with God Most High from thy trouble in the world and from thy torment in the Hereafter.'"<sup>883</sup>

One of the rights of children is that they be treated equally with regard to gifts and affection. It is the Practice of the Prophet to caress and kiss small children. The Messenger (S) used to kiss Hasan. Aqra' bin Habis<sup>884</sup> said: "I have ten children. I have never given any one of them a kiss." The Messenger said: "Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy."

The Messenger (S) was on the pulpit when Hasan fell on his face. At once, he ran down from the pulpit, took him in his arms, and recited this verse: "*Your wealth and your children are a temptation.*" (Q. 64:15)

Once the Messenger (S) was performing a formal prayer. When he knelt for the prostration, Husayn put his foot on (the Prophet's) neck. The Messenger (S) delayed so long that the Companions thought that perhaps he was receiving a revelation in which the long prostration was necessary. When he returned the salutation (at the end of the prayer), they asked: "Wast thou receiving a revelation that thou prolongedst the prostration so long?" He replied: "No! No! Husayn had turned me into his camel. I did not want to interrupt him."

<sup>883</sup> This passage means that the father has done what he could and from the age of 16 onwards, the child is a man and responsible for his actions.

<sup>884</sup> Aqra' bin Habis (Aqra'<sup>c</sup> bin Hābis): A member of the tribe of the Banu Tamim, he embraced Islam in the Year of Deputations when the Hassan bin Thabit (see Note 1119), the poet of the Prophet, defeated their orators in a poetry contest. He was a Companion of the Prophet and was killed in Khorasan AH31/651CE.

To summarize, the rights of the parents are stronger than the rights of children, for honoring (the parents) is incumbent upon children. God Most High has made that the equal of worshipping Him, and has said: *Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none save Him, and that ye do good to parents.* (Q. 17:23) From the greatness of (the parents') rights, there are two things obligatory upon (children): One is that a majority of the religious scholars hold the opinion that if there is a food which is doubtful—but not definitely unlawful—and their parents command them to eat of it, they should obey them in that and eat. For, the pleasure (of the parents) is more important than the avoidance of the doubtful. The other is that it is not proper to depart on a journey without their permission, except if it be an absolute individual religious obligation, such as to acquire the knowledge of formal prayer and fasting where there is no one near at hand to instruct them. It is correct that performing the Pilgrimage of Islam is not proper without their permission for, even though it is a religious obligation, delay in (performing) that is allowable.

Someone requested permission from the Messenger (S) to go to join the war in defence of Islam. He said: "Dost thou have a mother?" (The man) said: "I do." (The Messenger) said: "Go and sit beside her, for thy heaven lies beneath her feet."

Another came from Yemen and sought permission to join the war in defence of Islam. (The Messenger) asked: "Dost thou have a mother and father?" He said: "I do." (The Messenger) said: "First seek their permission. If they do not give it, obey them, for after the Unity, thou dost not carry any intimacy to God Most High better than obeying them."

Know that the right of an elder brother approaches that of a father. It is related in the Traditions: "The right of the elder brother over the younger brother is like the right of the father over his children."

#### THE RIGHTS OF SLAVES

The Messenger (S) said: "Fear God Most High with respect to slaves and those in your power. Give them of the food that ye yourselves eat. Clothe them with what ye clothe yourselves. Do not order them to perform tasks to which their strength is not equal. If they are suitable, keep them; if not, sell them. Do not torment God's creatures, for God Most High has placed the slaves under your control. If He wanted to, He could place you under their control." Someone asked, saying: "O

Messenger of God, how many times should I forgive my slaves (for misbehavior)?" He replied: "Seventy times."<sup>885</sup>

Ahnaf bin Qays<sup>886</sup> was asked: "From whom didst thou learn brotherhood?" He said: "From Qays 'Asim<sup>887</sup> whose slave girl was bringing a iron spit from which a roast lamb was hanging when it slipped from her hand and fell upon his infant and killed him. The slave girl fainted from fear and terror. He said to her: 'Be calm. It was not thy fault. I free thee for the sake of God Most High.'"

'Awn bin 'Abdullah<sup>888</sup> would say whenever his (male) slave disobeyed him: "Hast thou completely adopted the habits of thy master? Just as thy master rebels against his Lord, so thou doest the same (against me)." Abu Mas'ud Ansari<sup>889</sup> had a (male) slave whom he used to beat. He heard a voice, someone was saying: "O Abu Mas'ud, leave him alone." He looked about and saw the Messenger (S), who said: "Know that God Most High has more power over thee than thou hast over him."

So, the rights of slaves are that one not stint in their food, eating, and clothing. One should not look upon them with superiority, for they too are human beings. If they make an error, one should think about one's own errors with respect to God Most High. When one's anger is provoked, one should reflect upon the power of God Most High over oneself.

The Messenger (S) has said: "To whoever has someone in his power who takes pains and endures smoke to prepare food for him, and then he withholds (that food) from him, say: 'Have him sit and eat.' If he does not do this, one should take a morsel and wipe it in ghee and with his own hand place it in (the slave's) mouth, and he should say: 'Eat.'"

<sup>885</sup> "Seventy times": this and similar numbers frequently invoked for a large sums, such as 'seven' and 'forty,' are not to be taken literally. They are an indication of amount. Cf. Matthew 18:22 in the Bible for a similar use of "seventy."

<sup>886</sup> Ahnaf bin Qays: *Ahnaf* means "he of the deformed foot." His real name was Sakhr. He influenced his tribe, the Banu Tamim, to embrace Islam. He was a commander in the conquest of Persia and led expeditions as far east as Balkh in modern north-central Afghanistan. He was neutral in the Civil War between the parties of Mu'awiyah and 'Ali and was a strong opponent of the Kharijites and the Shiahs. He was very influential in Basrah where he was reportedly a friend of Hasan Basri (see Note 398). He died in AH67/687CE. (Bagley)

<sup>887</sup> Qays 'Asim: Qays 'Āsim, Abū 'Alī al-Tamīmī. A prince and shrewd leader of the Tamim tribe of northern Arabia in the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliyyah*). he accepted Islam in AH10-11/631CE and died in Basrah AH20/640CE.

<sup>888</sup> 'Awn bin 'Abdullah: 'Awn bin 'Abdullāh bin 'Utbah bin Mas'ūd. He was one of Abu Hanifah's teachers at Kufah in the 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century.

<sup>889</sup> Abu Mas'ud Ansari (d. AH101-2/720CE): Abū Mas'ūd Anṣārī rebuked Mughirah bin Shu'ba for postponing a prayer.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCERNING THE RULES OF HERMITISM AND WITHDRAWAL FROM MANKIND

Know that the religious scholars are in disagreement about seclusion<sup>890</sup> and hermitism<sup>891</sup> as to whether this is superior to mixing (with people). The opinions of Sufyan Thawri, Ibrahim Adham, Dawud Tayi,<sup>892</sup> Fudayl 'Iyad, Sulayman-i Khawass,<sup>893</sup> Yusuf Asbat, Hudhayfah Mar'ashi, Bishr Hafi, and many others of the pious and learned (R) is that withdrawing is superior to mixing. But a great number of superficial religious scholars are of the opinion that mixing (with people) is superior. 'Umar (R) says: "Observe your own portion of seclusion." Ibn Sirin says: "Withdrawal (from mankind) is worship."

Someone said to Dawud Tayi (R): "Give me some piece of advice." (Dawud) said: "Fast from the world and do not break that fast until death. Flee mankind as thou wouldest a lion." Hasan Basri (R) says: "When a person is content, he is without need; when he withdraws from mankind, he obtains soundness; when he refrains from envy, his virtue becomes apparent; and when he has endured a meager sustenance, he obtains eternal happiness."

Wuhayb bin al-Ward says: "Wisdom is ten: nine in silence, and the tenth in seclusion." Rabi Khuthaym (R) and Ibrahim Nakha'i (R) have spoken thus: "Acquire knowledge and withdraw from mankind." Malik bin Anas<sup>894</sup> used to visit the brethren and the sick and accompany biers. Then, one by one, he left these things and became a hermit.

Fudayl ('Iyad) said: "I am much obligated to the person who passes me by and does not greet me and does not visit me when I am ill." Sa'd Waqqas<sup>895</sup> and Sa'd bin Zayd<sup>896</sup> (R) were counted among the great Companions and stayed near Madinah at a place called 'Aqiq. They did

<sup>890</sup> "seclusion": P. *uzlat giriftan*.

<sup>891</sup> "hermitism": P. *zāwiyah giriftan*.

<sup>892</sup> Dawud Tayi: Dā'ūd al-Ta'i, Abū Sulaymān bin Nusayr. A disciple of Abu Hanifah (see Note 400), he became a jurisprudent and an ascetic. He died AH165/781-2CE.

<sup>893</sup> Sulayman-i Khawass: Sulaymān-i Khawāṣṣ Abū Ayyūb, an ascetic. He died AH162/778-9CE.

<sup>894</sup> Malik bin Anas: Abū 'Abdullāh Mālik bin Anas. The founder of the Malikite School of Law, one of the four great Sunni schools. He was considered the most learned man of his era and had a famous encounter with Harun al-Rashid (rgd. AH170/786CE to AH193/809CE). He lived from AH94/716 to AH179/795CE. He spent his last years in seclusion and the contemplation of God.

<sup>895</sup> Sa'd Waqqas: Abū Ishāq Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ. One of the early converts to Islam, he became a soldier and a governor. He was buried at Madinah in AH55/675CE. Also known as Malik.

<sup>896</sup> Sa'd bin Zayd: No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

not come for Friday prayers or for any other purpose until they died in that place.

A prince said to Hatim Asamm: "Dost thou need anything?" He said: "Yes." (The prince) said: "Ask." (Hatim) replied: "That thou do not see me and I not see thee." Some one said to Sahl Tustari (R): "I desire that there be association between us." (Sahl) said: "When one of his dies, with whom will the other associate? He should associate with that same Person now."

Know that there are differences of opinion about this, as there are concerning marriage: is it better to marry or not to marry? The truth of that is that it depends upon circumstances. There is the person for whom withdrawal is more meritorious, and there is the person for whom mixing is better. This will not be clear until the benefits and drawbacks of withdrawal have been discussed in detail.

### **THE BENEFITS OF WITHDRAWAL**

Know that there are six benefits in withdrawal from mankind:

THE FIRST BENEFIT is the peace of mind for the remembrance (of God) and reflection: for the greatest of the acts of worship are the remembrance (of God) and reflection upon the wonders of the creative power of God Most High in the kingdoms of the heavens and on earth, and for perceiving the mysteries of God Most High in this world and the next. Indeed, the greatest of these is that one devote one's self in its totality to the remembrance of God Most High so that one be unaware of all that is other than He. One is unaware, too, of one's own self and nothing remains save God Most High. This cannot be achieved except by seclusion and withdrawal (from mankind). All that is other than God Most High is a distraction from God Most High, especially for the person who does not have the strength, while among people, to be with the True One and not with the people, as the prophets (R) were.

It was for this that the Messenger (S), at the beginning of his work, withdrew to Mount Hira and cut himself off from mankind until the light of prophethood gathered strength and reached that degree that he would be with people physically, but his soul would be with God. He said: "If I had taken someone as a friend, I would have taken Abu Bakr, but the love for God itself left no place for any other friend." The people thought that he had a love for each person.

It is not strange if the saints attain that degree too, about which Sahl Tustari (R) says: "For thirty years I have been conversing with God Most High, but people imagine that I am speaking with them." It is not impossible that there be a person so consumed by his love for some creature that, because of this passion, when among people he does not

hear their words or see them. However, just anyone should not be deceived by this, for most of them fall from the business among people.

Someone said to a pious recluse: "How wonderful is thy patience in thy loneliness!" He replied: "I am not alone, for my companion is my God. When I want to confide in Him, I perform formal prayer. When I want Him to confide in me, I read the Quran."

Hasan Basri was told: "There is a man here who always sits alone behind a pillar." (Hasan) said: "When he comes, inform me." When he was told that the man had arrived, he went to him and said: "Thou always sittest by thyself. Why dost thou not mix with the people?" (The man) replied: "Something has happened to me that has distracted me away from mankind." (Hasan) said: "Why dost thou not go to Hasan and listen to his words?" He said: "This task has diverted me from Hasan and mankind." (Hasan) asked: "Why and what is this task?" (The man) replied: "There is no time, none; for God has blessed me, and none, because of my sins. I give thanks for the blessings and I seek forgiveness for the sins. I cannot attend to Hasan, nor to people." (Hasan) said: "Keep thy place for thou art superior to and more learned than Hasan."

Harim bin Hayyan<sup>897</sup> went to Uways Qarani<sup>898</sup> (R). Uways asked him: "Why hast thou come?" (Harim) said: "I have come to get comfort from thee." Uways said: "I have never known anyone who knows and recognizes God Most High and is given comfort by another."

Fudayl, may God have mercy upon him, said: "When the darkness of night falls, my soul rejoices. I say: 'I shall sit in seclusion with God Most High until daylight comes.' When the light of dawn appears, sadness permeates my soul. I say: 'Now people will distract me from Him.'"

Malik Dinar (R) says: "Whoever speaks with God Most High in private conversation and does not love this more than conversation with (His) creatures has little knowledge. His soul is blind, and his life is wasted."

<sup>897</sup> Harim bin Hayyan (Harim bin Hayyān): Another of the Followers and an important ascetic of the 1st Islamic (7th CE) century. He left Makkah to visit Uways Qarani (see following Note), missing him at Qaran. Back in Makkah, he heard that Uways was in Kufah, so he journeyed there, but could not find him for a long time. Eventually he found him accidentally on the way to Basrah. Uways was performing an ablution on the banks of the Euphrates. Uways, who had never met Harim, addressed him by name. When Harim asked how he knew his name, Uways replied that his soul knew his soul.

<sup>898</sup> Uways Qarani: One of the Followers. He was described by the Prophet to the Companions and he asked them to convey his greeting to him. After the Prophet's death, 'Umar sought him from among the people of Qaran. They considered him a madman and said he was living in the desert. 'Umar and 'Ali found him and conveyed the Prophet's message. He fought on the side of 'Ali during the Civil War (for the succession to the caliphate after the death of 'Uthman) and died in the battle of Siffin AH37/657CE.

One of the wise says: "For anyone whose request is that he see someone and sit with him, it is waste if his heart is empty of what it should have and asks for help from outside."

So, from all of this, know thou that whoever has the ability to become habituated to the continuous remembrance of God Most High, or to continuous reflection, obtains the knowledge and spiritual insight of His majesty and beauty. This is greater than any act of worship that is connected with people, for the ultimate of all (kinds of) happiness is that a person goes to (the next) world and that the intimacy and love of God Most High overwhelm him. Intimacy is completed with remembrance, and love is the fruit of spiritual insight. And spiritual insight is the fruit of reflection. All of this is best done in solitude.

**THE SECOND BENEFIT** is that one is delivered from many sins by cause of withdrawal. There are four sins of mixing (with mankind) that not everyone escapes:

**THE FIRST SIN** is backbiting or listening to backbiting. That is the ruin of religion.

**THE SECOND SIN** is with respect to enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. If one is silent, he becomes either a sinner or a rebel (against God); if one forbids the wrong, he makes himself the enemy and terror of many.

The third sin is dissimulation or hypocrisy, for they are necessary in social intercourse. If one is not courteous with people, they are upset. If one is courteous, it soon becomes dissimulation, for separating flattery and dissimulation from courtesy is extremely difficult. If one speaks with two enemies, and agrees with each of them, one is two-faced. If one does not, one will not find release from their enmity. The least of this is that one tells everyone he sees: "I am always solicitous (for thy welfare)." This is most often a lie. If one does not say something like that, they will become alienated. Too, if thou say it, it is hypocrisy and a lie. The least of this is that one enquires of every person: "How art thou and how are thy people?" while in one's mind, one is free of concern about how they are. This is pure hypocrisy.

Ibn Mas'ud (R) says: "There is the person who goes out and has business with some person. He is, hypocritically, so laudatory and courteous to that person that he surrenders his religion for that affair. He returns home with his need fulfilled and God Most High angered.

Sari Saqati says: "If a brother comes to me and I stroke my beard to smooth it, I fear that my name will be entered in the registry of hypocrites." Fudayl was sitting some place by himself. Someone came to him. (Fudayl) asked: Why hast thou come?" (The man) replied: "For the peace and friendliness of seeing thee." He said: "By God, this is closer to grief! Thou hast not come except to be courteous to me falsely, and I the same to thee. Go away from here, or I must arise and depart."

When the forefathers, may God have mercy upon them, saw each other, they did not enquire about the affairs of the world; they asked about religion. Hatim Asamm said to Hamid Laffaf:<sup>899</sup> "How art thou?" (Hamid) relied: "Safe and sound!" Hatim said: "Safe is after thou hast crossed the Bridge<sup>900</sup> and sound is at the time thou enterest paradise."

When Jesus (A) was asked: "How art you?" he would answer: "That which is of benefit to me is not under my control. I am not able to repel that in which my harm lies. I am the hostage of my own deeds and my affair is controlled by another. So, there is no one poorer or more helpless than I."

When Rabi' Khuthaym (R) was asked how he was, he would say: "Weak, a sinner, and with the moment of death on my neck. I eat of my own sustenance and hope for mercy." When Abu Darda (R) was asked how he was, he would reply: "It is good if I be safe from hell." When Uways Qarani was asked how he was he, he would say: "How would it be with a person who arises in the morning and does not know whether at night he will be alive or not, and at night he does not know that he will be alive in the morning or not?" When Malik Dinar was asked how he was, he said: "How would a person be whose life is diminishing and his sins increasing?" When a sage was asked how he was, he answered: "I eat the sustenance of God Most High and obey the command of His enemy, Iblis."

When Muhammad bin Wasi' was asked how he was, he said: "How would a person be who is every day one stage closer to the Hereafter?" When Hamid Laffaf, may God have mercy upon him, was asked how he was, he answered: "I am in the hope that one day I shall be in good health." They said: "Art thou not in good health?" He replied: "Good health is the day when I do not commit a sin." Someone at the time of death was asked: "How art thou?" He replied: "What would the state of a person be who is starting out on a long journey without provisions, and who will go to the grave without a companion, and who will go before a just King without any defence?" Hassan bin Sinan<sup>901</sup> (R)

<sup>899</sup> Hamid Laffaf (Hāmid Lāffāf): This incident is also found in 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-Awliya'* in the chapter about Hatim Asamm. This puts him in the 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century and probably in the same general region: northern Afghanistan and Central Asia.

<sup>900</sup> "the Bridge" (*Sirāt*): that is, the bridge over hell.

<sup>901</sup> Hassan bin Sinan: in this place HK gives his names as Ḥassān bin Abī Sinān both in the text and the index, but AA has Ḥassān bin Sinān in his text (AA has no index) and Ibn Khallikan records a Hassan bin Sinan. His full name was Abū Layla Ḥassān bin Sinān bin ʿAwfi bin ʿAwfi Tanūkhi. Born a Christian, became a noted Muslim scholar as his sons were scholars, jurisprudents, and writers. He spoke and wrote Persian, Syriac, and Arabic and it is said that he lived 120 years, dying AH180/796-7CE. However, it must be noted that there was also a Hassan bin Abi Sinan (see Note 1639), who is mentioned by Qushayri as well as by both HK and AA in the Fourth Pillar of this work.

was asked how he was. He replied: "What would the state of a person be who must certainly die, be caused to rise and give an account (of himself)?"

Ibn Sirin (R) asked someone how he was. (The man) replied: "How would it be with a person who owes 500 dirhams, has a family, and has nothing?" Ibn Sirin went home, took 1000 dirhams, and gave it to the man, saying: "Pay 500 dirhams to thy creditor and spend 500 dirhams on your family. I shall not ask anyone how he is again!" This was because he feared that if he could not take care of the person whom he asked, he would be a hypocrite.

The great have said: "We have seen persons who would never greet each other, but if one issued an order to another for all that he possessed, (the other) would not refuse. Now, there are people who visit each other and enquire after each other a lot, even to the hens in the yard, but if they dare to ask one of them for a silver coin, they will meet nothing but refusal. All of this (display of friendship) is nothing but hypocrisy."

Consequently, since the people have become of this kind, whoever mixes with them, if he agrees with them in this hypocrisy and lying, is their partner in it. If he opposes them, they become his enemies and want his misfortune. They busy themselves bearing tales about him. His religion rebukes them, and their religion rebukes him.

*THE FOURTH SIN* which necessarily comes from social intercourse is that thou art influenced by the character of whomever thou associatest with without thy realizing it. Thy nature steals from his nature without thy knowing it, and that is the seed of many sins, such as sitting with those who are negligent (in their faith). Their likeness will appear in whoever sees the worldly and their avidity for the things of the world.

Whoever sees sinners—even though he may loathe them—when he sees them frequently, (their behavior) will appear less serious to him. The loathing of the soul falls away from every sin that is common. If a theologian is seen in silken garments, all will disparage that; but it may be that they backbite every day and not disparage that, even though backbiting is worse than wearing silk. Indeed, it is worse than adultery, but custom has lessened (the seriousness of backbiting) because of the frequency with which it is done.

Indeed, even listening to the stories of the negligent is damaging, just as listening to the stories of the Companions and saints is profitable. When one remembers them, mercy rains down, as is related in the Tradition: "*At the remembrance of the righteous, mercy descends.*" That means that the cause of that mercy is that a desire for goodness arises

while the desire for the world is reduced as one listens to the events of their lives. In the same way, at the remembrance of the negligent, curses rain down. For, the reasons for the cursing are heedlessness and the desiring of the world. Their remembrance causes a deficiency in faith. Therefore, seeing them is much worse. It was for this that the Messenger (S) said: "The bad companion is like the blacksmith from whom, (even) if he does not burn thy clothes, thou absorbest the smoke. The good companion is like the perfumer from whom, (even) if he does not give thee musk, thou absorbest the scent." So, know that solitude is better than a bad companion, but a good companion is better than solitude, as is found in the Traditions.

Therefore, social intercourse and sitting with anyone who carries thee away from the desire for the world and invites thee to God Most High is a great windfall. Be his attendant. Keep thy distance from anyone who is the opposite of this, especially the learned person who is greedy for the world and whose actions do not equal his words, for that is a fatal poison and bears away the reputation of a Muslim entirely. He says to himself: "If he had any Islam at all, he would have taken precedence." If a person has a tray of almond cakes in front of him and eats them greedily, crying out: "O Muslims! Keep away from these! They are poisoned!" no one would believe him. His audacity in eating (them) attests to the fact that there is no poison in the cakes. There are many people who would not dare to eat the unlawful or commit sins, but when one hears or sees that a learned person doing just that, he becomes emboldened.

It is for this reason that it is forbidden to narrate a story about the sins of the learned. There are two reasons (for this): one is that it is talebearing and the other is that it encourages people to imitate that person, using his behavior has a justification for their own. Satan rises up in aid of this and says: "Thou will not be greater or more abstemious than such-and-such a scholar."

The general condition of that is that when one sees the shortcoming of a religious scholar, one should think two things: one is that one should realize that it may be that the knowledge of that scholar is an atonement for his shortcoming, for knowledge is a great intercessor—and an ordinary person does not have (such) knowledge—when (the scholar) does not act upon what he believes. The other is that one should realize that the scholar's knowing that it is not right to eat of the unlawful is like the commons' knowing that drinking wine and committing adultery is not right. Everyone knows this much, that drinking wine and committing adultery are wrong, but the wine-drinking or adultery of the commons does not become the argument that emboldens a person (to justify those acts). The eating of the unlawful by the scholar should be the same.

Most of the emboldenment for the forbidden is done by persons who are called “religious scholars,” but who are devoid of the true nature of knowledge; or they know some excuse or explanation for what they are doing that the commons do not understand. The common folk must look at it this way lest they be destroyed.

The point of this is that the times are such that one ought to avoid association with most people. The example of Moses and Khidr, peace be upon them, in which Khidr holed the boat and Moses protested, was related in the Quran for this.<sup>902</sup> And, the point is that in such times, association with most people is harmful. Consequently, seclusion and hermitism is to be preferred to (association with) most people.

**THE THIRD BENEFIT** is that since no city, except as God may will, is free of enmity and temptation, whoever goes into seclusion is delivered from temptation. If he mixes amongst the people, he may fall into temptation, his religion may be injured, and he may become imperiled.

‘Abdullah (bin) ‘Amr ‘As (R) says that the Messenger (S) said: “When thou seest the people gather together so”—and he intertwined his fingers—“take an attendant inside the house, hold thy tongue, and do what thou knowest and pass over what thou dost not know. Busy thyself with thine own affairs and withhold thyself from public affairs.”

‘Abdullah (bin) Mas‘ud<sup>903</sup> narrates that the Messenger (S) said: “A time will come upon mankind when the religion of a man will not be safe, except that he flee from place to place, from mountain to mountain, and from hole to hole, like a fox that conceals itself from mankind.”<sup>904</sup> And he was asked: “O Messenger of God, when will that be?” He replied: “When a livelihood without sin cannot be made. At that time, it will be lawful to remain unmarried.” They asked him: “O Messenger of God, but you have ordered us to marry!” He said: “At that time, the destruction of a man will be at the hands of his mother and father; if they are dead, at the hands of his wife and children. If he does not have these, at the hands of his relatives.” They asked: “Why?” He answered: “They will blame him for want and poverty. They will demand things from him

<sup>902</sup> This is a reference to the famous passage in the Quran (Q. 18:65-82) describing the encounter of Moses with “one of Our servants,” not named in the Quran, but called Khidr in Islamic literature. Moses pleads to be allowed to accompany him so that he may learn right conduct from him. There follows a series of strange acts by the servant of God at which Moses begins to rebel, instead of remaining patient. The holing of the boat is one of these mysterious actions. The servant of God upbraids Moses for not his lack of patience and gives the explanation of all of these. Having done so he parts from Moses. See also Note 637.

<sup>903</sup> ‘Abdullah (bin) Mas‘ud: See Ibn Mas‘ud, Note 974.

<sup>904</sup> “like a fox that conceals itself from people,” following AA. HK has “like a fox that conceals itself from itself.”

that he has not the power to provide, until he falls to self-destruction." In this Tradition, though it is about celibacy, withdrawal (from mankind) is also indicated. And that time, which the Messenger (S) promised a long time before our era, has arrived.

Sufyan Thawri, may God have mercy upon him, used to say about his own era: "*Would to God that celibacy had been made lawful!*" By God, remaining single has now become lawful!

THE FOURTH BENEFIT is that one obtains liberation from the mischief of mankind and is at peace. For, so long as one is among people, one will not be free of their troubling, backbiting, and suspicions, nor will one obtain liberation from impossible cravings, nor will one be devoid of them. For, when they see something from one that their minds do not comprehend, they will start to censure him. If one wishes to meet the rights of all the people—from felicitations, to condolences, to entertaining—one would spend all of his time doing such things and not attend to one's own affairs. If one sets one group over another, the others will become unhappy and displeased with him. But, if he would withdraw, with a single stroke, he would free oneself from all of this and everyone would be happy!

One of the great saints would never be separated from the graveyard and a book, and he would sit alone. He was asked why he behaved thus. He answered: "I have never seen any place sounder than solitude, nor any preacher better than the graveyard, nor any companion better than a book."

Thabit Bunani,<sup>905</sup> may God have mercy upon him, was one of the saints. He wrote to Hasan Basri: "I have heard that thou art going to perform the Greater Pilgrimage. I would like to accompany thee." Hasan said: "Let us live under the veil of God Most High, for it may happen that when we are together we may see something, one from the other, that will cause enmity between us." This, too, is among the benefits of solitude, so that the curtain of virtue remains in place and the interior does not become exposed, because it may be that something discouraging will become visible.

THE FIFTH BENEFIT is that the people's coveting of one will be broken off and his coveting of them. Many sins are born from this for both (sides). Envy appears in whoever sees the people of the world, and covetousness follows envy, and disgrace follows covetousness. It was for this reason that God Most High said: *And strain not thine eyes toward*

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<sup>905</sup> Thabit Bunani: Thābit al-Bunānī, Abū Muḥammad bin Aslam. Known for piety and asceticism, he died about AH118/736CE.

*that which We have provided some pairs among them of the flower of the life of the world.* (Q. 20:131)

And the Messenger (S) said: "Do not look at that adorned world of theirs, for it is their temptation." And the Messenger (S) said: "Do not look at whoever is above thee in this world, for the blessings of God Most High to thee may appear humble." If someone sets out to seek the ease of the rich that he sees, he may not attain it and his afterlife will be harmed. If he does not seek it, he will set himself to effort and be patient, but that is also difficult.

**THE SIXTH BENEFIT** is that one is liberated from the sight of the boring, the foolish, and the people who are naturally abhorrent. A 'mash was asked: "Why have your eyes become so damaged?" He said: "From too much looking at boring people." Galen<sup>906</sup> said: "Just as there is fever in a body, there is fever in the soul, and the fever of the soul is the viewing of the tiresome." Shafi'i (R) says: "I have never sat with a tiresome person that I did not find that that the side of mine towards him was more tired."

While this benefit is a worldly one, yet religion is also connected with it. For, when one sees someone the sight of whom is unpleasant, the tongue or the heart starts to backbite. When one is alone, one is safe from all of that. These are the benefits of withdrawal from mankind.

### **THE DETERIMENTS OF WITHDRAWAL FROM MANKIND**

Know that some religious and worldly aims cannot be attained without other (persons) and cannot be accomplished without mixing with people. In solitude, they are relinquished and the loss of these aims causes the detriments of withdrawal. They are six:

**THE FIRST DETERIMENT** is that one is left behind in the acquisition of knowledge and instruction. Know that for anyone who has not acquired the obligatory knowledge (of religion) withdrawal is forbidden. However, if one has learned the obligatory things, but is not able to learn or comprehend the other sciences, and desires to withdraw (into seclusion) in order to perform worship, it is lawful. But if one be able learn all of the religious sciences, going into seclusion is a great loss, for those who seclude themselves before acquiring knowledge waste most of their time in sleep, idleness, and useless fretting. Since knowledge which

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<sup>906</sup> Galen (Arabic and Persian *Jālinūs*): A noted Greek physician who served at the court of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180CE). His writings produced a compendium of the best of the medical knowledge of the ancient world and were transmitted, in part by the Muslims, to the Renaissance Europe and formed the basis of the further development of medicine and physiology. He lived c.120 to c.200CE.

has not been consolidated is not devoid of pride and deceit in worship, nor of errors of thought and absurdity in belief. If one spends the entire day in acts of worship, it may that one's ideas with respect to God Most High be blasphemous or heretical and one not know it.

In short, withdrawal is suitable for the religious scholars, but not for the common folk. For, when a common person is ill, it is not right that he flee from the physician. If he treats himself, he will soon perish.

As for teaching, its degree is great. Jesus (A) says: "Whoever knows some knowledge, puts it into practice, and teaches others will be called to the King of the greatest heaven. However, teaching and withdrawal from mankind are not compatible. Therefore, teaching takes precedence over withdrawal from the world. This is with the condition that (the teacher's) intention and the intention of the student be religion and not the seeking of status and wealth. The knowledge taught must be beneficial in religion and that which is more important should come first.

For example, if one starts with obligatory purification, one says that the purification of clothing and the skin is less important. One's aim is another obligatory purification lying beyond that: that is the purification of the eye, ear, tongue, hand, foot, and other parts of the body from sins. He explains this in detail and then commands that it be put into practice. If this be not done, and (the student) seeks the knowledge (of another subject), his purpose is status.

When one has finished with that purification, one says the object of purification is something else beyond that: that is the purification of the soul from the love of the world and from everything other than God Most High. The true meaning of *There is no god but God* is this: that one have no other object of worship save God Most High. Whoever is bound to his own passions *has taken his passions as his god*. He has taken his own inclinations as his god and is deprived of the true nature of faith. He will not know the way of cutting off from passion so long as he does not read thoroughly what we have said in the Deliverers and the Destroyers.<sup>907</sup> This is an individual obligation<sup>908</sup> upon all people.

If the student, before he has finished these studies, pursue the knowledge (of the rules concerning) menstruation, divorce, the land tax, and legal opinions about lawsuits; or an opposing creed; or seek the science of scholastic theology, dispute, and debate with the Mu'tazilites and the Karramites<sup>909</sup> or some other subject, know that he seeks status

<sup>907</sup> "the Deliverers and the Destroyers": The Fourth and the Third Pillars in this work.

<sup>908</sup> "individual obligation" (*fard-i 'ayn*): See Note 974.

<sup>909</sup> Karramites (*Karrāmiyān*): An originally Hanafite group of theologians, founded by Ibn-Karram (d. AH255/869CE) in Khorasan, was active for one or two centuries. Little is known about their positions as none of their books seem to have survived and what we have is from their opponents. Some of the Karramites became noted mystics. (W. Montgomery Watt: Islamic Philosophy and Theology, p.79. Edinburgh, 1962).

and wealth, not religion. One should keep one's distance from such a person. His evil is great. If he does not debate with the devil that invites him to perdition, and if he does not litigate with his self which is his enemy, yet he desires to debate and litigate with Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, and the Mu'tazilites, this is the proof that Satan has taken him by the hand and laughs at him.

The traits inside him, such as envy, pride, hypocrisy, conceit, love of the world, and greed for status and wealth—all of these are detriments which may cause his destruction if he does not cleanse them from his soul and become occupied with that which is more correct of the legal opinions concerning marriage, divorce, deposits, and rent. If a person makes a mistake in this, it is nothing more than that his reward drops from two to one, for the Messenger (S) has said: "Whoever exercises independent judgment and does that which is right has two rewards. If he makes a mistake, one." Therefore, if one follows the school of Shafi'i or that of Abu Hanifah, may God have mercy upon them both, the profit is no more than this. If (the student) does not erase those traits from himself, the profit of that is the destruction of his religion.

The times have become such that no more than one or two persons will be found in the great cities who are willing to teach in this manner. Consequently, withdrawal is better for the teacher, for whoever teaches knowledge to a person whose purpose is the world, it is as though he sells a sword to a person who is intent upon brigandage. If one says: "It may be that his intention is for the way of religion," it is as though one were to say: "Perhaps this highwayman will repent one day and go to fight in the defense of the faith." If one says: "A sword will not call him to repent, but knowledge may call him to God," this too is a mistake. For, knowledge of legal opinion and transactions, scholastic theology, grammar, and language call no person to God, because in them there is no caution or persuasion for religion. Indeed, each one of them sows the seeds of envy, pride, arrogance, and bigotry in the heart. *Report is not the same as seeing.* Look at how the persons have been occupied with this knowledge were and how they died.

The knowledge that invites (one) to the Hereafter and restrains (one) from this world is the knowledge of the Traditions and the knowledge of (Quranic) Commentary. We shall discuss these sciences in "The Destroyers" and "The Deliverers." Consequently, that knowledge should be bestowed generously, for it affects all people except the unusual person whose heart is hard. Therefore, if a person seeks this knowledge under the stipulations we have stated, for him withdrawal from mankind is one of the great sins.

So, if a person masters the study of the Traditions, Commentary, and that which is important, but finds the quest for rank dominant over himself, he must flee from teaching, even though there is much good in

his teaching others.<sup>910</sup> His destruction will lie in that, and he will be the sacrifice of others. He will be among those about whom the Messenger (S) said: "God helps His religion by means of people who have no portion of it." Their similitude is that of the candle which lights a home while it burns and diminishes.

It was for this reason that Bishr Hafi buried seven bookcases full of books of Traditions that he had heard and did not narrate more Traditions. He said: "I do not narrate them as I find an appetite for narration in myself. If the appetite would become still, I would narrate." The great ones have said thus: "*Haddathanā*<sup>911</sup>" is a gate of the world. Whoever says *haddathanā* is saying: 'Seat me in the highest place.'"

'Ali (R) passed by someone who was seated on a chair lecturing. He said: "He says this: 'Know me!'" A person sought permission from 'Umar (R) to give advice to the people after the pre-dawn obligatory formal prayer. ('Umar) refused. (The man) said: "Dost thou forbid giving advice?" ('Umar) replied: "Yes. I fear that so much of the pride of greatness will inflate thee that thou wilt touch the Pleiades."<sup>912</sup>

Rabi'ah 'Adawiyah<sup>913</sup> said to Sufyan Thawri (R): "Thou wouldest be a good man if it were not that thou lovest the world." (Sufyan) asked: "What is that?" She said: "Thou lovest to narrate Traditions."

Abu Sulayman Khattabi says: "Avoid and stay away from those who want to associate with you and learn knowledge in this era, for in them there is neither wealth nor beauty. Outwardly, they are friends, but inwardly, enemies. They praise you to your face and say ugly things about you in your absence. They are all hypocrites, gossips, rumormongers, deceivers, tricksters, and frauds. Their motive is to make of thee a ladder for themselves for their own corrupt purposes. They will make an ass out of thee so that they can ride about the city at their pleasure. They consider their coming to thee a favor and want thee to sacrifice thine own reputation, status, and wealth in exchange for their coming to thee. (They want) thee to rise to the fulfillment of all the rights of themselves, their relatives, and their adherents; that thou be their people's fool and the enemy of their enemies. If thou violatest any of these, how clear will they make their enmity about thy reputation and thy knowledge!"

<sup>910</sup> As Ghazzali himself fled from teaching in Baghdad during a spiritual crisis.

<sup>911</sup> *haddathanā*: "He related to us...," the traditional beginning of the narration of a Tradition in Arabic.

<sup>912</sup> The constellation also known as the Seven Sisters (Ar. *thurayyā*).

<sup>913</sup> Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah (Rabi'ah 'Adawiyah) of the tribe of Qays bin 'Adi: Perhaps the most famous woman mystic and ascetic in the history of Islam, she was born in either AH95/713-4CE or four years later and died at Basrah in AH135/752CE or, according to some, AH180/796CE. Born into a poor family, she was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery, but her sanctity achieved her freedom. She taught mystic love (*muhabbah*) and intimacy (*uns*) with God. Her prayers are justly admired. (SEI, etc.)

In truth, it is as he said: "No student today will accept a teacher for nothing. First, he will demand a stipend that goes on and on. The wretched teacher does not have the strength to abandon students, for then he will no longer be respected by public opinion. Neither can he come up with their stipends without serving oppressors and dissimulating with them. He places his Islam on their heads and obtains nothing from them." But, for him who can teach and remain distant from these detriments, teaching is superior to withdrawal.

Now, it is the convention of the common person that he not have a bad opinion about any scholar he sees lecturing and teaching; that (he not think) that "(the scholar) is doing this for wealth and status." Rather, he thinks that (the scholar) is doing it for God Most High, for it is his religious obligation to think thus. But when the inside is unclean, there is no room left for good opinion, for each person thinks that everything that is in himself is in the people. Therefore, these remarks have been delivered so that the religious scholar fulfill the conditions of his task and the common person not make this an excuse for his own stupidity and also not censure the religious scholars, for (the scholar) may be ruined by this bad opinion.

THE SECOND DETRIMENT is that one is restrained from taking profit and conferring profit. However, getting profit is earning that cannot be accomplished without mixing (with people). It is not proper for a man with a family to withdraw from mankind and not engage in earning a livelihood (to support them), for harm inflicted upon the family is one of the great sins. If one has the means for sustenance and does not have a family, withdrawal is preferred.

Conferring benefit is to give voluntary charity and to stand up for the rights of Muslims. If one is in retreat and one does not engage in anything other than outward worship, it would be better for one to engage in a lawful enterprise and give voluntary charity than to seclude oneself. And if in one, the way is opened to the spiritual knowledge of God Most High and familiarity with the secret conversation with Him, this is preferable to all voluntary donations, for the aim of all acts of worship is this.

THE THIRD DETRIMENT is that one is deprived of the spiritual struggle and spiritual self-discipline that comes from enduring the nature of people. This is a great benefit for the person who has not yet fully attained spiritual self-discipline, for a good nature is the root of all spiritual disciplines and acts of worship. They are not accomplished without mixing (with mankind), as a good nature is that one which tolerates the absurdities of people. The servants of the Sufis mix so that by means of the begging from the ordinary folk they may shatter their pride and haughtiness. They smash their miserliness by providing for the

Sufis. By enduring their bad dispositions, they cut off their own bad dispositions from themselves.

This has been the beginning of the task, even though now intention and thought have been altered and for some, the object is wealth and status. Consequently, if a person has attained spiritual self-discipline, withdrawal is better for him. The object of spiritual self-discipline is not that one always suffer distress, just as the aim of some medicines is not the bitterness, rather, it is that the ailment go away. When it has gone, it is not a condition that one must continue forever to take the bitter medicine. Instead, the objective of spiritual self-discipline is to acquire a fondness for the remembrance of God Most High. The objective of spiritual self-discipline is to drive away from oneself whatever holds one back from that fondness so that one may attend to it.

Know that just as spiritual self-discipline is inescapable, so too is giving spiritual self-discipline and training to others a part of the work of religion. This cannot be accomplished in conjunction with withdrawal. Indeed, there is no way for the shaykh to escape mixing with his disciples. Withdrawal from them cannot be a condition. However, just as the religious scholars must be wary of the stumbling blocks of hypocrisy and the quest for status, so too the shaykhs must be wary (of them). When these conditions are observed, their mixing with others is superior to withdrawal.

THE FOURTH DETRIMENT is that in seclusion, one may be overcome by the whisperings (of Satan) and the soul may abhor the remembrance (of God) and be seized with fatigue. This will not be relieved except by conviviality with people. Ibn 'Abbas (R) says: "If I did not fear inner promptings, then I would not associate with people." 'Ali bin Abi Talib (R) says: "Do not take back the peace of soul from the soul; for if thou loathe the soul once, it becomes blind."

Therefore, there must be an hour each day with someone in whose company one may find rest, for that increases liveliness. However, that person must be one with whom he discusses religion. They talk over their own circumstances with respect to religious shortcomings and the arrangement for the facilitation of religious affairs. But sitting with the heedless, even but for an hour, is injurious. That pure joy which has come into being during the rest of the day is darkened. The Messenger (S) said: "One must be alert to who are the friends of him who sits with thee as a friend."

THE FIFTH DETRIMENT is that the spiritual reward of visiting the sick, accompanying a bier, responding to invitations, congratulating, offering condolences, and (performing) other social duties is lost. But in these acts, there are also detriments and the custom of hypocrisy and ostentation may find a way into him, too. There is the person who cannot

withhold himself from these detriments, but cannot execute their requirements. It is better for such a person to seclude himself. There are and have been many people among the forefathers who have done thus and who have abandoned all such things, for they have seen their own safety in doing so.

THE SIXTH DETRIMENT is that mixing with and attending to the rights of people is a type of humility, and in withdrawal, there is a kind of arrogance. It may be that the motive for seclusion is lordship and arrogance. He may want the people to visit him and he not visit them.

It has been related that there was a great wise man among the Children of Israel. He had written 360 books about wisdom, so he thought that he had achieved some place close to God Most High. A revelation came to the messenger of that time: "Say unto him: 'There is much chatter in the land and thou hast made thine own name and fame. I do not accept all of this chatter about thee.'" Then he became afraid and ceased that activity. He sat in seclusion and said: "Will God Most High now be pleased with me?" A revelation came: "I am not pleased with thee." Then he came out of seclusion and began to go to the market and mix with the people. He would sit with him and rise with them; he would eat and walk about the market. Then a revelation came: "Now thou hast gained My pleasure!"

Therefore, know that perhaps some one may choose withdrawal out of pride and the fear that he not be respected in assemblies and gatherings. Or, he may fear that they see his deficiencies in his knowledge and actions. He makes that retreat a curtain to conceal his own deficiencies. He is always in the hope that people will come to visit him, look for a blessing, seek propinquity, and kiss his hand. This is the essence of hypocrisy.

The sign of the withdrawal for the sake of God Most High is in two things: one is that one does not remain idle in seclusion. One is busy with remembrance (of God) and meditation, and busy with knowledge and worship. The other is that one finds the visits of people who come to him repugnant, except that of the person from whom there is some religious benefit.

Abu al-Hasan Hatimi<sup>914</sup> was one of the lords of Tus. He went to greet Khwajah Abu al-Qasim Gurgani<sup>915</sup> (R). He was one of the great saints. (Abu al-Hasan) began to apologize, saying: "It is my fault that I

<sup>914</sup> Abu al-Hasan Hatimi (*Abū al-Ḥasan Ḥātimī*): a 4th Islamic (10th CE) century. No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

<sup>915</sup> Khwājah Abū al-Qāsim Gurgānī: An important Sufi of the 4th Islamic (10th CE) century Khorasani school. One of his students, Shaykh Abu 'Ali Farmudi is mentioned as a friend of Ghazzali. (Safa)

do not come to serve thee more often." (Abul-Qasim) replied: "O Khwajah, do not make excuses. Everyone (else) is grateful for coming, but we are grateful for not-coming. For us, because of the coming of that elder, we have no anxiety of the heart about anyone, that is, the Angel of Death." A prince went to Hatim Asamm and said: "What dost thou need?" (Hatim) replied: "That I not see thee and thou not see me."

Know that retiring into seclusion so that people honor one is a great ignorance; for the lowest of the degrees is that one comprehends that nothing of his affair is in the hands of the people. He knows that if he goes to the top of a mountain, the faultfinder will say: "He is dissimulating." If he goes into a tavern, his friends and disciples will say: "He is traveling the road of censure, so he throws himself out of the sight of people." In whatever he is, the people will be of two groups with respect to him. He must attach his soul to religion, not to mankind.

Sahl Tustari (R) told one of his disciples to do something. He replied: "I cannot, out of fear of what people will say." Sahl turned to his companions and said: "A person will not reach the truth of this affair unless he gains one of two qualities: either people will depart from his sight so that all that he sees is God, or he will not look upon them so that he has no fear of the manner in which people see him."

Hasan Basri (R) was told: "Some people come to thine assemblies and learn some matters so that they may object to them and seek out their defects." He said: "I have seen that my own self covets the highest heaven and the neighborhood of God Most High, but it never covets safety from mankind, for even their Creator is not safe from their tongues."

Therefore, from all of this, the benefits and detriments of seclusion are made manifest. Each person must take stock of himself and review himself in that respect, so that he may know which may take precedence for him.

### THE RULES OF WITHDRAWAL FROM MANKIND

When a person goes into seclusion, he must declare the intention to withhold his own evil from mankind, to seek safety from the evil of mankind, and to seek the quiet to worship God Most High.

He must never be idle; rather, he should busy himself with remembrance, meditation, knowledge, and deed. He should not let people come to him, nor should he enquire about the news and false rumors of the city. He should not enquire about the condition of people, for everything that he will hear will be a seed in his breast and sprout from his breast when he is alone. The most important work in private is the cutting off of the inner voices so that remembrance may be pure. The news of people is the seed of the inner voices.

He must be satisfied with meager food and clothing. If he is not, he is not without need of the association with people. He must patient with the sorrow of his neighbors and not pay attention to whatever they say or do concerning him, either in praise or censure. If they call him a hypocrite in seclusion or sincere, or humble, or proud, he should not listen to it, for all of this roils his life. The objective of withdrawal from mankind is that one be engaged and immersed in the work of the Hereafter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RULES OF CONDUCT ON A JOURNEY

Know that there are two (kinds of) journey: one is outward, the other is inward.

As for the inward journey, it is the journey of the soul in the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth, the wonders of the handiwork of God Most High, and the stages of the way of faith. The (inward) journey for true men<sup>916</sup> is this, that they sit in their rooms while they wander through a heaven, the breadth of which is many times greater than the seven heavens and earths,<sup>917</sup> plus more! The worlds of the empyrean are the Paradise of the mystics: that heaven the entrance to which is not achieved without prohibition, cutting off, and hindrance. God Most High invites (the people) to this journey when He says: *Have they not considered the heavens and the earth and what things God hath created?* (Q. 7:185)

For the person who is incapable of making this journey, perhaps he may make an external journey and transport the body so that he may take some benefit from each place. The similitude of this person is that of the person who walks on his own feet to the Ka'bah in order to see the external aspect of the Ka'bah. The similitude of the other is that of a person who sits at home until the Ka'bah comes to him and circumambulates him and tells him its secrets. There is a great difference between these two. Concerning this, Shaykh Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khayr, may God have mercy upon him, said: "While some blister their feet, others reach the goal without blisters."<sup>918</sup>

We shall discuss the rules of conduct for the outward journey in two sections in this book. As the inward journey is very subtle, it would not accept exposition in this book. The first part concerns the Intention of travel, its rules of conduct, and its different kinds. The second part concerns the knowledge of the concessions of travel.

<sup>916</sup> "true men" (Per. *mardān*): the plural of "man" (*mard*), it has a specialized meaning of "heroes, warriors, men of manly character." (Steingass) Ghazzali appears to be using the word in the sense of "great men of faith, adepts." Though masculine in form, we do not believe that it is meant to exclude the possibility of female saints such as Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah (see Note 913), whom Ghazzali mentions with approval in this work several times.

<sup>917</sup> The (seven) earths: the seven climates or climatic regions.

<sup>918</sup> That is: those immersed in the outward aspect of things must endure great physical suffering to achieve their ends, while those immersed in the inner world achieve that without physical effort.

**PART ONE: CONCERNING THE INTENTION OF TRAVEL,  
ITS RULES OF CONDUCT, AND ITS DIFFERENT KINDS**

Know that there are five kinds of journey:

THE FIRST JOURNEY is in the search for knowledge. This journey is a religious obligation when it is for the acquisition of the knowledge of religious obligations. It is a Practice of the Prophet when it is for the learning of those Practices. The journey to acquire knowledge has three aspects:

*ONE* is that it be to acquire knowledge of the Law and Doctrine. It is related in the Traditions: "Whoever departs through the gate of his house in the quest for knowledge is on the path of God until he returns." It is also related in the Traditions: "The angels spread their wings over the student." Among the forefathers, there was a person who traveled a great distance for a single Tradition. Sha'bi<sup>919</sup> says: "If a person travels to me from Syria in order to hear something, there is a benefit from that in the way of religion for him. His journey is not wasted." However, it must be a journey for some knowledge that will equip him for the Hereafter. Every bit of knowledge that does not call him from the world to the Hereafter, from envy to contentment, from hypocrisy to sincerity, and from the worship of the created to the worship of the Truth (God)—such knowledge is a cause of loss for him.

*THE SECOND ASPECT* is that one make the journey in order to know oneself and one's own character, so that one may work to treat those characteristics in oneself that are objectionable. It is also important that people, when they are in their own homes and affairs are going according to their wishes, have a good opinion of themselves and think that they are good-natured. On a journey, however, the veil is removed from their inner natures and circumstances occur which make known their own weaknesses, ill-natures, and inadequacies. When the disease is known, they may attend to its cure. Whoever has not made a journey is not brave in affairs. Bishr Hafi (R) said: "O readers (of the Quran), travel to cleanse yourselves, for any water that remains in one place becomes foul."

*THE THIRD ASPECT* is that one travel in order to see the handiwork of God Most High on land and sea, mountain and plain, and in the various climes; to become acquainted with the variety of different creatures among animals, plants, etc., in the various quarters of the world; and to realize that all glorify their Creator and testify to His Oneness. The person whose eyes were opened by this can hear words of

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<sup>919</sup> Sha'bi: Abū ‘Amr Ḥāfiẓ bin Sharāḥil al-Sha’bī (AH19-103/640-721-2CE), one of the Followers (*Tābi‘īn*).

praise without word or sound. He can read the Divine Script written on the face of all existing things, without letters or lines. From these, he can learn the secrets of the Kingdom. He himself has no need of circumambulating the world. Instead, he looks at the kingdom of the heavens that circumambulates about him every night and day and speaks the marvels of their own secrets to him. A herald cries out: *How many a portent is there in the heavens and the earth which they pass by with face averted!* (Q. 12:105) Indeed, if a person examines the marvels of his own creation and understands its parts and attributes, he would see in himself the arena for his contemplation all his life. Indeed, he will then see the wonders of himself. Passing beyond the external eye, he opens the inner eye.

One of the great ones says: "People say open your eyes to see the wonders. I say close your eyes to see the wonders." Both are right, for the first stage is to open the external eye and see the marvels. Then, one goes to another stage and the external marvels, which are related to the worldly physical bodies, come to an end. They are exhaustible, but there is no end to the inner marvels as they are related to souls and truths, and there is no end for the truths. In whatever form that it is spiritual and true, the form is the portion of the external eye and the true nature is the portion of the inner eye. The form is very worthless. It is like the person who sees a tongue and thinks that it is a piece of flesh. He sees a heart and supposes that is a blob of black blood. He must look to see what the value of this, which is the portion of the external eye, is beside that which is the true nature of the tongue and heart! All of the parts and atoms of the world are like that. The degree of whoever has looked with nothing more than the external eye is near the degree of a quadruped. However, in some traditions it is said: "The external eye is the mould of the internal eye." For this reason, a journey undertaken to admire the wonders of creation is not devoid of benefit.

THE SECOND JOURNEY is for worship, such as for performing the Greater Pilgrimage, fighting in defence of Islam, and visiting the graves of the prophets, Companions, and the Followers; indeed, (also) visiting religious scholars and the great ones of religion—for looking at their countenances is an act of worship and the blessing of their supplication is great. One of the blessings of seeing them is that it creates a desire to emulate them. Therefore, seeing them, too, is an act of worship and also the seed of many acts of worship. When the benefits of their breaths<sup>920</sup> and words aid in this, the benefits are doubled. Going the graves of the saints on purpose is lawful. The Messenger (S) said: "*Do not make the*

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<sup>920</sup> Breaths (*anfās*). This is a metaphor for the spiritual reward (*thawāb*) of association and sitting with them, close enough to feel their breaths.

*preparations for a journey except to the three mosques.*" This refers to the mosques of Makkah, Madinah, and Jerusalem. The reason for this is that mausoleums and mosques do not confer blessing, except those of those three places. However, if a visit is to living religious scholars, it is not included in this (rule), and when they are dead they still are not included in this. Consequently, the visiting of the graves of the prophets, saints, and theologians on purpose and traveling for that purpose is lawful.

THE THIRD JOURNEY is to flee something that confuses religion, such as status, wealth, sovereign power, or the business of the world. This journey is a religious obligation upon that person for whom keeping to the way of religion is not made easy by the activities of the world; for the way of religion can be found with peace of mind. However much a person is never able to be (totally) free from the necessity of his own affairs, he can be disencumbered: *the disencumbered have been saved*, even though they are not without a burden. Usually, those who find some pomp and knowledge are diverted from God.

Sufyan Thawri says: "These are bad times. Even the obscure and the unknown are afraid, so what will be the state of the famous? It is the time that thou flee every place where thou art known and go to some other place where thou art not known." And he too was seen going with a sack on his back. They asked him: "Where art thou going?" He answered: "I am going to such-and-such a village where they give food more cheaply." They said: "How dost thou consider this lawful?" He said: "Wherever the living is more ample, go there, for religion is safer and the heart more tranquil." Ibrahim Khawass, may God have mercy upon him, never remained in any city more than forty days.

THE FOURTH JOURNEY is that for trade seeking the goods of the world. This is a permissible journey. If by this one intends to deliver himself and his family from dependence upon others, this journey is an act of devotion (to God). If it is for an excess of worldly goods, for pride and adornment, it is the way of Satan. It usually happens that this person travels in suffering his entire life, for no end appears to the increase of solvency. Then, at the end, he will be attacked on the road, or his wealth will be stolen, or he will die in some foreign place and the (local) ruler will seize his property. The best that may happen is that his heirs will get hold of it and spend it to satisfy their whims and lusts without remembering him. As much as possible, his will is not implemented, his debts not repaid, and the worries of the Hereafter will remain with him. There is no swindle greater than this: that he bear all that hardship and carry all the care, while others enjoy the comfort (of the fruit of his efforts).

THE FIFTH JOURNEY is that of sightseeing and recreation. This is lawful if it is not long and it is occasional. However, if a person becomes habituated to traveling about cities without any purpose except to see new cities and new people, there is a difference of opinion about this (type of) journey among the religious scholars. Some are of the opinion that it is giving oneself trouble uselessly and therefore not proper. The correct view in our opinion is that it is not forbidden, for sightseeing is also a purpose, even though it be base, and it is permissible for everyone it suits. Such people have a base nature and this motivation, too, is suited to them.

There are others who wear rags and have grown accustomed to going from city to city and place to place without its purpose being the visit to a spiritual guide<sup>921</sup> and attendance upon him. Rather, their purpose is sightseeing, for they have not the strength for the acts of worship. The way has not been opened unto them from within to the stations of Sufism. Under the rule of laziness and idleness, they do no have the endurance to stay in one place under the authority of one of the spiritual guides. They roam the cities and wherever there is a bounteous dining cloth, there they linger longer. If it is not according to their desire, they berate the servant, insult him, and move on to another place where they are told the dining is better. They may make of the visit to a tomb a pretext, saying: "This (visit) is our objective," when it is not. If this journey is not forbidden, it is certainly repugnant.

These people are censurable, even if they are not rebels (against God) or sinners. Wherever they eat the bread of the Sufis and beg and make themselves up in the appearance of Sufis, they are rebels and sinners, and what they receive is unlawful. Not everyone who wears a ragged garment and prays the five obligatory formal prayers is a Sufi. Indeed, the Sufi is he who has some quest and is heading in that direction, has attained that, or is endeavoring to (attain it). He does not take anything except what is needed for that, or he is a person who is occupied with the service of these people. The bread of the Sufis is not lawful for more than these three types.

As for that man who is haughty and whose inner being is devoid of the quest and spiritual effort, and who does not serve, he does not become a Sufi by donning the tattered robe . Rather, if there is something that has been made as an endowment for scoundrels, it is lawful for him. That he has appeared unnecessarily in the shape of a Sufi, without their character, is nothing other than hypocrisy and rascality. The worst of these people is the one who has learned a few paltry phrases from the Sufis and repeats them futilely. They think the first and last of knowledge has been opened to them because they can say those things. It

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<sup>921</sup> "spiritual guide": *pir*.

may be that the evil of their speech lead to their looking upon knowledge and the religious scholars with contempt. And it may be that the Religious Law will appear trivial to them and they may say: "This is for the weak; for those persons (such as us) who have become strong on the way (of the Sufis), nothing can cause any harm." Their religion has become two jugs<sup>922</sup> that does not accept any uncleanness. When they have reached this level, executing one of them is better than killing a thousand unbelievers in India or Rome,<sup>923</sup> for people are on their guard against the unbelievers, but these accursed ones nullify Islam using the rhetoric of the basis of Islam. In this era, Satan has not spread any snare like this snare into which so many have fallen and been destroyed.

**THE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE TRAVELER  
THE OUTWARD RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE TRAVELER, FROM THE  
BEGINNING TO THE END**

There are eight rules of conduct:

*THE FIRST RULE* is that first one should settle grievances and return deposits to their owners. One should give the subsidence money to those for whom one is responsible. One should prepare lawful provisions for the journey and take enough so that one will be able to entertain one's fellow travelers. Giving food, speaking pleasantly, and behaving gently with the animal drivers during a journey are among the virtues of good character.

*THE SECOND RULE* is that one should find a suitable friend to be his helper in religion. The Messenger (S) prohibited travel by oneself, having said: "Three makes a group." And he has said: "They must make one of their number the leader." For, on journeys, many problems occur and any affair not controlled by one person will end in ruin. If the affairs of the universe were with two gods, it would be very ruinous indeed! The person selected to be the leader should have a good character together with considerable experience of travel.

*THE THIRD RULE* is that one bid farewell to one's friends (who are) present and recite to each one the supplication which the Messenger (S) would say: "*I entrust thy religion, thy security, and the conclusions of thy work to God.*" And, when one of those close to him went on a trip, the Messenger (S) would say: "*May God provide thee with piety and*

<sup>922</sup> "two jugs" (*dū qullah*): See Note 210 to Prolegomena.

<sup>923</sup> Rome: This refers to the Eastern Roman Empire, in Ghazzali's time confined to the capital at Constantinople (Istanbul), the southern Balkan Peninsula, Greece, and the coastal regions of northern and western modern Turkey.

*forgive thy sin and direct thee to the good wherever thou betakest thyself.*" This supplication is a Practice of the Prophet to be uttered by those remaining behind (to the person setting out on a journey). When one bids farewell, one should entrust everyone to God Most High. One day 'Umar Khattab (R) was giving presents. A man came with a child. 'Umar said: "*Glory be to God!* I have never seen anyone so resembling another as this child resembles thee." The man said: "I shall inform thee of his wonders, O Commander of the Believers. I went on a journey and his mother was pregnant. She said: 'Wilt thou leave me in this condition?' I said: '*I entrust to God that which is in thy womb.*' Then, when I returned, this child's mother had died (while still pregnant). One night while we were talking, I saw a glow in the distance. I asked what it was. They said: 'That is from the grave of thy wife. I see it every night.' I said: 'That woman performed her obligatory formal prayers and fasted the obligatory fast, what is happening?' I went to the grave and opened it to see what was the matter. I saw a lamp placed in it and this child playing. I heard a voice that said to me: 'This is the one thou didst entrust to Us. If thou hadst also entrusted his mother to Us, thou wouldest have received her back, too!'"

*THE FOURTH RULE* is that one reduce the obligatory (four-bow) formal prayers to two bows. One should perform a formal prayer of asking God for guidance before setting out on the journey. That formal prayer and its supplications are well known. Next, one should perform a four-bow formal prayer at the time of setting out. Anas says: "A man came to the Messenger (S) and said: "I am thinking about going on a journey. I have written my will. Should I give it to my father, my son, or my brother?" The Messenger (S): "No person who goes on a trip and has left a deputy in his place more liked by God Most High than the performance of four bows (of formal prayer)."<sup>924</sup> At the time the bags are packed, one should recite the Praise<sup>925</sup> once and the *qul huwa-llahu*<sup>926</sup> once. At the end, one should say: "*O God, I seek nearness with these (Quranic verses) to Thee; make them my deputy for my family, my property, and my children. (The prayer) will be his deputy for his family, his property, and a refuge around his house until he returns to his family.*"

*THE FIFTH RULE* is that when one reaches the gate of the residence, one says: "*In the name of God. I have trusted in God; there is*

<sup>924</sup> That is, the prayer itself is the traveler's deputy in his household while he is away.

<sup>925</sup> The Praise (*al-Hamdu*): the first chapter of the Quran, the Opening (*Fatihah*), which opens with that word meaning "praise be..."

<sup>926</sup> The *Qul huwa-llahu..*: the first words of the 112th chapter of the Quran, the Sincerity (*Ikhlas*), which begins with those words meaning: "Say! He is God..."

*no power and no strength save with Go. My Lord, I seek refuge with Thee from going astray or being led astray, from erring or being caused to err, from oppressing or being caused to oppress, or from being ignorant or being made ignorant.*" When one sits upon one's riding animal, one says: "*Glory be to Him who has subjugated this and we were not able to control them. Truly we are returning to Thee.*" (Q. 43:13-14) Another rule is that one should try to arrange the journey to commence on a Thursday, in the morning, for the Messenger (S) used to start his journeys on Thursdays. Ibn 'Abbas says: "Whoever will go on a trip or will make some request for something from a person, should do so at dawn, for the Messenger (S) has offered this supplication: "*O God, bless my people in their early morning on their Thursday.*" He also said: "*O God, bless my people in their early mornings and their Saturdays and their Thursdays.*" So Saturday and Thursday mornings are blessed.

**THE SIXTH RULE** is that one make the load of the animal light and not stand on its back when it is standing and not fall sleep. One ought not to strike its face. In the morning and evening, one should go on foot an hour to make (one's own) feet light and to lighten the load of the animal, and to please the animal driver. Some of the forefathers hired (animals) with the condition that they not alight from them at any time. Then, they would dismount so that it would be a voluntary charity for the animal. Any animal that is beaten without cause or is laden with a heavy burden will demand justice at the Resurrection. Abu Darda (R) had a camel that died. He said: "O camel! Take care! Do not complain about me to God. Thou knowest that I loaded thee in accordance with thy strength."<sup>927</sup>

One must show whatever one is loading upon the animal to the animal driver and make it a condition to obtain his agreement. It is not proper that one add to that. Ibn al-Mubarak was sitting upon an animal. Someone handed him a letter, saying: "Deliver this." He did not accept it, saying: "I have not agreed (about this added burden) with this animal driver." He did not rely on the words of jurisprudents that "(the letter) was virtually weightless and is within the limits of permissibility." Indeed, this righteousness is the perfection of scrupulousness.

**THE SEVENTH RULE** is that which 'Ayishah (R) says: that the Messenger (S) would take a comb, a mirror, a toothbrush, and a collyrium pot when going on a journey. The Sufis have added a rope and bucket—this was not the custom among the forefathers. Wherever they went, they would perform the dry ablution and contented themselves with stones for cleaning (after bodily functions). They would purify

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<sup>927</sup> This passage strongly suggests that animals will experience some form of resurrection and demand justice from their abusers.

themselves with any water they did not know to be impure. But even though (taking the rope and the bucket) was not the custom, with respect to these people (the Sufis), it is good because their journeying is not such that they not should abstain from precautions, for caution is good. Moreover, the travels of the forefathers were mostly connected with warfare in defence of Islam, earnest striving,<sup>928</sup> and great deeds so that they did not do such things.

*THE EIGHTH RULE* is that when the Messenger (S) returned from a journey and his eyes fell upon Madinah, he would say: “*O God, make it for us a good abode and livelihood.*” Then he would send someone ahead. He forbade any person from entering his house suddenly. Two persons disobeyed him. Each one saw something disagreeable in his own house and sorrowed for it. Upon his return, he would first go to the mosque and perform a two-bow prayer, and he would say: “*In repentance, in repentance, returning to our Lord. Let no sin pass upon us.*”

It is a confirmed Practice (of the Prophet) to bring the fruits of the journey to the people of one’s household. In the Traditions, it is related that if one does not have anything, one should throw a stone in the sack. This represents the confirmation of this Practice. These are the external rules of conduct of travel.

HOWEVER, THE RULES FOR THE ELITE ARE INTERNAL: that one does not undertake a journey until he knows that an increase in his religion lies in it. When on the road, if he finds some deficiency in his soul, he should return. He makes the intention that in every city he goes he will visit the graves of the saints and seek out the shaykhs and take some benefit from each one of them, not so that he can talk about it (when he returns home), saying: “I saw some shaykhs,” but so that he can act upon it. He should not stop in any city more than ten days, except at the indication of a shaykh who is the object (of his journey). If he goes to visit a brother, he should not remain more than three days, for that is the limit of hospitality,<sup>929</sup> unless he would be upset (by his guest’s departure). In that case, he should stay.

When he goes to a spiritual guide, he should not stay more than a single night and day, for the purpose is not more than a visit. When he goes to greet, he should knock on the door of the house and wait until he comes out. He should not begin any matter until (the formalities) of

<sup>928</sup> “earnest striving” (*jihād*): any effort, including warfare, in defence of Islam. The term also includes intellectual effort, fighting one’s own carnal appetites, spending, and investment, etc., advancing the cause of Islam and the well-being of Muslims.

<sup>929</sup> Three days is the traditional limit of hospitality with immunity and without question among the Arabs.

visiting him have first been completed. He should not speak in (the spiritual guide's) presence until asked. When asked, he should confine himself to the reply. If he wishes to pose a question, he should seek permission to do so first. In that city, he should not indulge in pleasure, for that nullifies the sincerity of the visit. He should busy himself on the road with remembrance of God, glorification, and recitation of the Quran in his heart, so that no one hears it. When someone converses with him, he should consider replying to him more important than reciting a Glorification. If he is engaged in some (business or work) in a settled region and that is ready, he should not travel, for that is ingratitude.

#### **PART TWO: IN EXPLANATION OF THAT KNOWLEDGE WHICH TRAVELERS SHOULD LEARN BEFORE SETTING OUT**

It is necessary for one to learn the concessions of travel, even if one does not intend to take advantage of them. It may be that some need will compel one (to use them). The method of finding the direction of formal prayer and telling time (of the obligatory formal prayers) must also be learned.

With respect to obligatory purification, there are two concessions: one is wiping with the hands and the other is the dry purification. For the obligatory formal prayers there are two: one is the shortening and the other the conjoining. In the Practice of the Prophet, there are two: performing (the obligatory formal prayer) while mounted on an animal, and performing it while moving. For obligatory fasting, there is one concession: that is breaking the fast. These are the seven concessions:

THE FIRST CONCESSION is the wiping of the hand<sup>930</sup> (*mash*) on one's footgear. Whoever who puts on the footgear in a state of complete obligatory purity and then does something which would cause him to lose the state of purity may wipe the footgear until three days and nights have elapsed from the first occurrence (of the impurity). If he is a resident, then it is for one day and night. There are five conditions to this concession:

*FIRST*, the obligatory purification must be first completed, then the footgear are put on. It is the view of Shafi'i that if one washes one foot and then puts on the footgear before washing the other foot, it is not lawful. Therefore, if one does that, one must take the footgear off the first foot and wash it again.

<sup>930</sup> "wiping with the hands" (*mash*): as taking off footgear during travel can be difficult or inconvenient, instead of washing the feet to above the ankle in the usual lesser purification, one may simply pass the moistened hand over the footgear, touching it lightly.

*SECOND*, the footgear must be such that one is used to walking a little in it. If it does not have leather, it is not lawful.

*THIRD*, it must reach the ankle. If in the area of obligation,<sup>931</sup> something is visible or there is a hole (in the footgear), it is not proper, according to Shafi'i (R). However, according to Malik, even if (the footgear) is torn, if one can walk wearing the footgear, it is lawful. This is the older view held by Shafi'i,<sup>932</sup> and in our view is preferable, for footgear often gets worn or torn during travel. Repairing it every instant is not possible.

*FOURTH*, one should not take off the footgear if one has performed the purification by the wiping of the hand. If one takes them off, it is better to redo the purification. If one confines this to washing the feet, it is apparently lawful.

*FIFTH*, one should not extend the wiping to the leg. Rather, one should wipe the upper part of the foot; the instep is preferred. Wiping with one finger is allowed, but with three fingers is better. One should not stroke more than once. When the stroking exceeds this, one should limit it to one night and day. The Practice of the Prophet is that whenever one wants to put on footgear, one should first turn it upside down. For, one day, when the Messenger (S) had put the footgear on one foot, a crow stole its pair, but dropped it from (its beak) and a snake came out of it. The Messenger (S) said: "Tell whoever has faith in God and the Day of Resurrection not to put on footgear before shaking it."

THE SECOND CONCESSION is the dry purification. We have discussed the details of this in the section Obligatory Purification.<sup>933</sup> We shall not repeat it so as not to be lengthy.

THE THIRD CONCESSION is that one shorten all four-bow obligatory formal prayers to two bows; except in four situations:

*FIRST*, one should perform them at the proper times. If the prayer has to be made up, it should be performed without shortening.<sup>934</sup>

*SECOND*, one should declare the intention of the shortening. If one recites the intention to perform the full obligatory formal prayer, or doubts whether he made that intention or not, it is incumbent upon him to perform the full prayer.

<sup>931</sup> "area of obligation": this is the part of the foot—the whole foot up to the ankle—which is washed during an obligatory purification using water. If the footgear does not come up to the ankle, thereby exposing part of this area, or is torn or has a hole exposing the foot, then—in this view—the purification by stroking is not lawful.

<sup>932</sup> That is, the original view held by Shafi'i, which he later changed to the view given before in the paragraph.

<sup>933</sup> See the First Pillar, Chapter Three.

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<sup>933</sup> See the First Pillar, Chapter Three.

<sup>934</sup> That is, with all of the usual four bows.

*THIRD*, one should not perform (a shortened) prayer behind a leader who is performing the complete prayer. If the leader is performing the complete prayer, one must do the same. Indeed, if one has reason to think that the imam is a resident and will perform the complete prayer, or has a doubt about this, performing the complete prayer is incumbent upon him, for it is not easy to tell a resident from a traveler. However, if one knows that the imam is a traveler and one is doubt about whether he will shorten the prayer or not, it is lawful for him to shorten the prayer when the imam does so, for the intention is unknown<sup>935</sup> and one cannot make the knowledge of that a condition.

*FOURTH*, that the journey be lengthy and permissible. The journey of a fugitive slave, the journey of a person for brigandage, going in search of unlawful stipends, or going without the permission of one's mother and father are forbidden and the concession is not lawful for such a person. It is the same for someone fleeing a creditor, but who has the funds to repay his debt. In summary, a journey is for some purpose and if that purpose which has prompted the journey is unlawful, the journey is unlawful.

A long journey is that which is (at least) sixteen parasangs.<sup>936</sup> Less than that does not qualify for the concessions. Each parasang has 12,000 paces. The journey commences at the point one leaves the built-up area of the city, even if one is not beyond ruins and gardens. The end of the journey occurs when one reaches the built-up area of one's home or in another town in which one intends to reside for three days or more, not counting the day of arrival and the day of departure. If one is not decided but must take care of some affairs and does not know when they will be completed, and he waits every day expecting them to be completed, and he delays more than three days—in one view, which is closer to analogy—it is lawful that one shorten his prayer. One is like the traveler whose mind is not made up and has no settled purpose.

THE FOURTH CONCESSION is the joining of prayers. It is lawful during a long, permitted journey. The noon obligatory formal prayer is delayed until it is performed together with the afternoon obligatory formal prayer,<sup>937</sup> or the afternoon obligatory formal prayer is advanced

<sup>935</sup> The declaration of Intention reciting before each formal prayer is done silently, so one who joined the prayer would not know whether the imam was a resident or not, or whether he intended to shorten the prayer or not.

<sup>936</sup> Sixteen parasangs (*farsang*): a distance equivalent to 16 leagues or about 57 miles, depending upon the terrain. In modern Iran, a *farsang* (or *farsakh*) equals roughly 6 kms. A parasang was originally based on the distance one could travel in an hour, so it would vary with terrain and other conditions.

<sup>937</sup> This is called the Delayed Joining (*jam'-i ta'khīr*). When this is done, the afternoon obligatory formal prayer precedes the noon obligatory formal prayer.

and performed with the noon obligatory formal prayer,<sup>938</sup> the same for the sunset and evening prayers. When the afternoon obligatory formal prayer is advanced to the time of the noon obligatory formal prayer, the afternoon prayer does not precede the noon prayer.

It is better that one not omit the voluntary formal prayers of the Practice of the Prophet so as not to lose their spiritual merit, for the journey will not profit by that. However, if one so desires, one may perform them while riding or walking. Their order is that first one performs the four-bow formal noon prayer of the Practice of the Prophet, then the four-bow formal afternoon prayer of the Practice. Then, the call to obligatory formal prayer is given, followed by the call to assemble in ranks. Then, the obligatory noon prayer is performed. After that, the call to assemble in ranks is given for the afternoon obligatory prayer. If one is to perform the dry purification, one renews it. Then, the afternoon obligatory formal prayer is performed. There is no delay between the two obligatory formal prayers except that necessary for giving the call to assemble in ranks and the obligatory purification (if necessary). Then one performs the two-bow formal prayer of the Practice of the Prophet that follows the afternoon obligatory formal prayer.<sup>939</sup>

If the noon obligatory formal prayer is delayed,<sup>940</sup> it is the same. If one has performed the afternoon obligatory formal prayer, one does not repeat it when arriving at a town before sunset. The rule for the sunset and evening obligatory formal prayers is the same. One opinion holds that joining prayers is lawful on a short journey as well.

**THE FIFTH CONCESSION** is performing the formal prayers of the Practice of the Prophet on the backs of animals is lawful and it is not necessary to face in the direction of prayer (Makkah). Indeed, the road takes the place of the direction of prayer. If one deliberately makes a turn of direction while performing a formal prayer and that not in the true direction of prayer, then the prayer is nullified, but if the turn is made by error or the animal is refractory, then there is no harm. The bows and prostrations are performed by gesture. One bends forward (for the bow), more so for the prostration. It is not required that one bow so much so as to put oneself in danger of falling. If one is on a litter, one should perform the bows fully.

**THE SIXTH CONCESSION** is to perform the formal prayers of the Practice of the Prophet while walking. At the beginning, one declares the Magnification while facing in the direction of prayer, which is easy for

<sup>938</sup> This is called the Advanced Joining (*jam'i taqdim*). In this case, the prayers are performed in order.

<sup>939</sup> This has been a description of the order of formal prayers in the Advanced Joining.

<sup>940</sup> That is, the Delayed Joining.

him but difficult for a person riding (an animal). The bows and prostrations are performed by token movements. One walks at the time of the Testimony and recites the greetings. One must watch so as not to step in any filth. It is not incumbent upon a person to turn from the road because of the filth on the way and to make things difficult for oneself. It is lawful for whoever is fleeing an enemy or is in a battle or is fleeing a dog or a wolf to perform the obligatory formal prayer on foot or on the back of an animal, as we have described for the prayers of the Prophet's Practice; and it will not be necessary to make them up.

THE SEVENTH CONCESSION is that one may break the fast. If a traveler has already made the intention for the fast, it is lawful for him to break it. However, if he has come out of the city after the dawn it is not lawful to break it. If he breaks it after reaching a city, it is not lawful for him to eat bread in the daylight hours. If he has not broken the fast before reaching the city, it is not lawful to break it then. It is better to shorten prayers than to perform them in full so that one is relieved of doubt and dispute. In the opinion of Abu Hanifah, performing them fully is not lawful. However, keeping the fast takes precedence lest one fall into the danger of (the need to) make up (the fast), except when one fears for oneself or does not have the strength to do so. In that case, breaking the fast is better.

Of these seven concessions, three are for long journeys: shortening (prayers), breaking the fast, and the three-day (purification by) wiping the hands over one's footgear. Three are lawful for a short journey: performing the prayers of the Prophet's Practice on the backs of animals and while walking, the missing of the Friday obligatory congregational prayer,<sup>941</sup> and performing the formal prayers using the dry ablution without making them up. As for the joining of two obligatory formal prayers, there is a difference of opinion. It would appear that it is not permitted on a short trip.

These religious scholars must instruct travelers before they set out, for when on the journey, there will be no one to teach them at the time of need. One must learn the methods for establishing the direction of prayer and the methods for establishing the times of prayer too, for the road is not by way of towns and villages and the direction of prayer is obscure. One should know this much: where the sun is at the time of the noon prayer when you turn to the direction of prayer; how it is at the time of its setting and its rising; and where the (north) pole is. If there is

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<sup>941</sup> This is not explicitly mentioned in the preceding catalog of concessions although it is a concession for travelers.

a mountain on the way, one should know whether the direction of prayer is to the right or left. There is no escape from these things.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: THE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR LISTENING TO MUSIC AND ECSTASY**

We shall discuss the rule about music in two parts:

### **PART ONE: CONCERNING THE PERMISSIBILITY OF LISTENING TO MUSIC AND WHAT OF THAT IS UNLAWFUL AND WHAT OF THAT IS LAWFUL**

Know that God Most High has a secret in the human soul. It is hidden in it just as fire in iron. When a stone is struck on iron, the secret (fire) is made manifest and plain. In the same way, listening to fine music<sup>942</sup> and rhythmic song excites that essence of the soul. Something appears in it without a person's having any choice about it. The reason for this is the relationship that the essence of every human being has with the World of the Sublime: that which is called the world of spirits. The World of the Sublime is the world of excellence and beauty; the root of excellence and beauty is proportion.<sup>943</sup> Whatever is in proportion gives proof of the beauty of that world. For, every beauty, excellence, and proportionality that is perceived in this world is all the fruit of the beauty, excellence and proportionality of that world.

Therefore, a sweet, rhythmic, proportioned song also has a resemblance to the marvels of that world. Because of this, an awareness is awakened in the soul. A movement—a yearning—is born that the (listener) himself may not understand what it is. This is in a soul that is simple and devoid of being affected by passion and yearning. However, if it is not empty and is occupied with something, that with which it is occupied starts to move and brighten, as does a flame when it is breathed upon.

For the person whose soul has been conquered by the fire of the love of God Most High, music is important, for it makes that fire burn hotter. However, for anyone whose soul harbors love for the false, music is fatal poison for him and is forbidden to him.

The religious scholars are divided about whether music is lawful or unlawful. He who holds that it is unlawful is of the superficial and has not come to understand that the love of God Most High truly alights in

<sup>942</sup> Music: the Arabic word used here (*samā'*) is derived from the root meaning 'listening.' It later acquired a technical meaning and is used to describe the rhythmic marriage of music and dance to enhance the mystical experience and to achieve spiritual ecstasy. The so-called "whirling dervishes" of the Mevlevi movement in Turkey are its most famous exponents.

<sup>943</sup> "proportion" (*tanāsub*): from Ar. meaning "proportion, balance, symmetry, harmony of parts," etc.

the human soul. For, he says a human being can love his own species, but how can he love that which is not of his species or that which bears no resemblance to him? Therefore, in his view, no love can come into existence in the soul save the love for the created; if love for the Creator comes into existence, according to the analogous fancy, it would be false. For this reason, he says that music is an amusement or the love for the created, and both of these are censured in religion.

If he is asked: "What is the meaning of the love for God Most High that is obligatory upon mankind?" he replies: "Obedience and devotion." But, this is a great error into which these people have fallen. We shall make that clear in the chapter on Love in *The Deliverers*.<sup>944</sup>

However, we say here that (the position of) music (with respect to the Law) must be judged by the soul, for music does not bring anything to the soul that is not there. Instead, it excites that which is already in it. Whoever has anything in his soul of truth—which is loved by the Religious Law and the nourishing of which is considered desirable—and he is a seeker of that, since music enhances it, it has spiritual reward for him. However, whoever has the false in his soul—which is censured by the Religious Law—will be punished for (listening to) music. And whoever has a soul devoid of either of these (conditions mentioned above), but listens to music for amusement and derives pleasure from it according to his nature, his listening is permissible.

Therefore, listening to music is of three kinds:

THE FIRST KIND is listening to it negligently, in the form of an amusement. This is the work of the heedless; the world (for them) is play and amusement, and (music) is one of these. It is not right that music be considered forbidden because it is pleasant, for pleasant things are not forbidden. Pleasant things which are held to be unlawful are so deemed not because they are pleasant. Rather, they are forbidden because they are deleterious and corrupting. The songs of birds are pleasing, but not forbidden. Vegetation, flowing water, and admiring the blossoms of flowers are pleasant, but not forbidden. Consequently, a beautiful sound is the same to the ear as greenery, flowing water, and blossoms are to the eye, or the smell of musk to the nose, or good-tasting food to the taste, or good wisdom to the mind. For each one of these senses there is a kind of pleasure. Why should it be unlawful?

The reasoning by which pleasant things, play, and watching them are not forbidden is that 'Ayishah (R) relates: "On the Day of the Festival the blacks were playing in the mosque. The Messenger (S) asked me: 'Dost thou want to see it?' I said: 'I do.' He stood by the door, his

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<sup>944</sup> The Fourth Pillar, Chapter Nine.

hand held out so that I could place my chin on his hand. I watched so much that he asked me several times: ‘Is that not enough?’ I said: ‘No.’”

This Tradition is found in the *Sahih*.<sup>945</sup> From it, five concessions become apparent:

*FIRST*, that occasional play and amusement, and the watching of them, are not forbidden, for in the play of the blacks, there was dancing and singing.

*SECOND*, that it took place in a mosque.

*THIRD*, that it is related in the Traditions that when the Messenger (S) took ‘Ayishah there, he said: “Go and play!” This was a command; therefore, if it were forbidden, why did he command it?

*FOURTH*, that at first he asked ‘Ayishah: “Dost thou want to see it?” This is a request. It was not as though if she were watching, he had remained silent. It would be right for a person to say: “He did not want to make her unhappy, which would have been ill-natured!”

*FIFTH*, that he himself stood with ‘Ayishah (R) a long time, even though he was not interested in watching or the play. From this it is clear that it is a part of a good nature to indulge women and children in such things, so that they may be delighted. This is superior to frowning and making a display of asceticism and piety.

It is also found in the *Sahih* that ‘Ayishah (R) relates: “When I was a child I used to dress a doll, as girls are accustomed to do, and several children would come to me. When the Messenger (S) would come, those girls would back away and run off. The Messenger (S) would send them back to me. One day he said to a little girl: ‘What are these dolls?’ She said: ‘These are my daughters.’ He asked: ‘What is that tied up among them?’ She said: ‘That is their horse.’ He said: ‘What is that on the horse?’ She said: ‘The feathers and wings of the horse.’ He said: ‘Since when do horses have wings and feathers?’ She said: ‘Hast thou not heard that Solomon had a horse with wings and feathers?’ The Messenger (S) laughed so broadly that all of his teeth were displayed.”

We have cited this so that it may be clear that being excessively pious, frowning, and refraining from things is not (a part of) religion, especially with children and with a person who likes to do such things as long as they are not repugnant. This Tradition does not imply that making pictures (of living beings) is lawful, for the dolls of children are of wood and rags and are not a complete depiction. In the Tradition, (it is said) that the wings of the horse were made of a rag.

‘Ayishah also relates that: “Two girls were playing tambourines and singing on the Day of the Festival. The Messenger (S) came in and

<sup>945</sup> This is a reference to the *Sahih* of Imam Bukhari, perhaps the most authentic and widely consulted of the six accepted collections of Traditions amongst Sunni Muslims.

lay down on his bedding, facing the other direction. Abu Bakr (R) arrived and was startled. He said: 'Satan's flute in the house of the Messenger (S)!' The Messenger said: 'O Abu Bakr, leave them alone, for it is the Day of the Festival.' Therefore, it is clear from this Tradition that playing tambourines and singing songs are not forbidden; indeed, they are permissible. There is no doubt but that the sound had reached the Messenger's (S) ears. His forbidding of Abu Bakr to stop those activities is clear proof that they are lawful.

**THE SECOND KIND** is that there be some blameworthy attribute in the soul, such as the person who has the love for a woman or a youth and makes music in their presence to increase pleasure; or in the hope of enjoying an absent desired one, to increase desire; or he listens to a song in which there is talk of ringlets, moles, and beauty which in his fantasy will come to him. This is forbidden, but most young people are of this kind and it is for the purpose of heating up the fire of false love. Extinguishing this fire is a duty, so how can fueling it be lawful? However, if the love he has is for his own wife or his bondmaid, it is one of the pleasures of the world and is lawful until divorce or sale. Then, it becomes unlawful.

**THE THIRD KIND** is that one's soul has a praiseworthy attribute which (listening to) music enhances. This is of four types:

**THE FIRST TYPE** is the anthems and verses of the Pilgrims describing the desert and the Ka'bah that excite the fire of yearning for the House of God in their souls. Payment for this music may be made to a person whose going on the Greater Pilgrimage is lawful. However, for the person whose parents are alive and they do not give their permission, or for some other reason that makes his Greater Pilgrimage improper, it is not permissible for him to sing these and this strengthens this hope (for performing the Pilgrimage) in his soul, unless he knows that even if his yearning (to do so) will gain strength, he will be able to listen yet stay. In this, it is close to the hymns of warriors of the faith and their music that makes people desire to go to battle and fight against the enemies of God Most High. For this, too, there may be payment. It is the same for the verses that are customarily recited in the ranks so that a man may be brave and fight and for the increase of courage. In this, there is also a reward for listening when the battle is with unbelievers. However, if (the battle) is with the People of God, it is forbidden.

**THE SECOND TYPE** is the dirges that bring tears and increase the sorrow in the heart. There is a reward for this, too, when the lamentations are about one's own shortcomings in being a Muslim and for the many sins of which one has been guilty, and for that which he has lost amongst the great degrees and of the pleasure of God Most High, as was the lament of David (A) who recited so many eulogies that they removed the

corpses from before him. He had a (fine) tone and a sweet voice. However, if feeling sorrow in the heart is forbidden,<sup>946</sup> chanting a dirge is forbidden. If someone of his has died about whom God Most High says: *That ye grieve not for that which has escaped you*, (Q. 57:23) do not sorrow over the past. If a person loathes the judgment of God Most High and is sad about that and mourns to increase that sadness, it is forbidden. For this reason, payment to a mourner is forbidden, for he is in rebellion (against God). Whoever listens to him is also a rebel.

*THE THIRD TYPE* is that someone is happy and wishes to increase that by listening to music. This, too, is permitted as long as the joy is for something lawful, such as a wedding, the feast or ceremony of shaving the head of an infant on the sixth day after its birth, circumcision, or upon the return of the traveler, as when the Messenger (S) reached Madinah, the people came out to greet him, beating tambourines, rejoicing, and singing these verses:

*"The full moon has risen upon us from the Pass of Farewell,  
Gratitude is incumbent upon us as long as the summoner  
summons to God."*

In the same way, it is lawful to rejoice on the festival days and to make music for that purpose, or when friends, by agreement, sit together and eat and want to please each other. (Such) music and rejoicing, with mutual agreement, is lawful.

*THE FOURTH TYPE*—and the main point is this—is that for a person whose heart has been conquered by the love for God Most high to the point of passionate love, music is important. It may be that its effect be greater than many customary good works. Whatever increases the love for God has a great reward. The music of the Sufis was originally for this reason, even though now it has become muddled because of a group who appear in their external likeness, but who are internally devoid of their values. Music has a great effect in the igniting of this fire (of the love for God). There is the person among them for whom some revelation appears in the midst of the music. There are graces in music that are not found outside it.

Those sublime states, which begin to attach to them from the invisible world because of the music, are called “ecstasy.” It may happen that their souls become as cleansed and purified as the silver that is placed in fire. That music throws the fire into the soul and removes its tarnishings. It may be that that which is attained through music not be attained through an abundance of self-discipline. And music activates the secret of the relationship that is between a human being and the world of

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<sup>946</sup> As in the case of the deaths of tyrants and oppressors.

spirits until it becomes possible for him to receive everything from that world to the point that he becomes unaware of all that there is in this world. His limbs may also falter and he may fall into unconsciousness.

The degree of that part of those states which is sound and genuine is tremendous. Too, the person who has faith in them and has prepared (himself) will not be deprived of their blessings. However, there are many errors in this and many mistaken ideas occur. Mature and experienced spiritual guides know the signs that distinguish the true from the false. It is not granted to a disciple to make music at his own wish just because he feels the urge to do so.

Khwajah 'Ali Hallaj<sup>947</sup> was one of disciples of Khwajah Abu al-Qasim Gurgani. He asked permission to make music. (His guide) replied: "Eat nothing for three days. Then, after that, order some delicious dish be prepared. If thy desire for music is great and thou prefer the music over the food, then thy request for music is true and it is granted to thee." However, for the disciple in whom the states of the soul have not yet appeared, or who knows nothing of the Way save its actions, or in whom the states are found, but he has not yet severed the ties of appetite, it is incumbent upon the spiritual guide to forbid him from music, for its harm to (that person) is greater than its benefit.

Know that whoever denies music, ecstasy, and the states of the Sufis does so from his own shortcomings and he finds an excuse (for them) in that denial. For, it is difficult to believe in that which one does not have. It is like the impotent man who does not believe that there is pleasure in (sexual) intercourse. That pleasure may be found in the strength of sexuality. Since that sexuality has not been created in him, how may he understand it?

Is it strange that a blind person deny the pleasure of admiring plants and flowing water? He has not been given eyes and that pleasure can only be obtained with the eye. Is it strange that a child deny the pleasure of chieftainship, rule, command, and holding empire? He knows the way of play, what (would he know) about the management of a kingdom?

Know that people, in the denial of states of the Sufis—whether they are scholars or common folk—are like children who deny that which has not yet touched them. That person who has a little bit of sagacity admits this and says: "I do not have this state, but I realize that they have it." Indeed, he has faith in that and holds it lawful. However, that person who considers anything which he himself does not have impossible for someone else is a total fool. It is about these people that

<sup>947</sup> Khwājah 'Alī Ḥallāj: No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

God Most High says: *And since they will not be guided by it, they say: This is an ancient lie.* (Q. 46:11)

**EXCURSUS: [WHERE LISTENING TO MUSIC IS UNLAWFUL]<sup>948</sup>**

Know that though we have said that music is allowed, it becomes forbidden for five causes. One must beware of them:

*THE FIRST CAUSE* is hearing it from a woman or from a youth as an object of the carnal appetite. This is forbidden. For, if a person has a soul immersed in the affair of God, since the carnal appetite exists from the beginning of creation and a pleasing visage comes before his eye, Satan arises in its aid. Thus, (such) music falls into the category of carnal appetite.

The music of children not as objects of temptation is lawful, but it is not lawful from an ugly woman when one can see her. Looking at women of any description is unlawful. Moreover, even if one listens to (her) voice from behind a curtain, should there be some fear of corruption, it is forbidden. If there is no such apprehension, then it is permissible. The proof of this is that two servant girls were singing in the house of 'Ayishah (R) and the Messenger (S) doubtless heard them. Therefore, the voices of women, like the faces of the young, are not indecent. However, looking at the young with a carnal appetite—where there is fear of some corruption—is forbidden, and the same is true for (listening to) the voices of women. This is according to one's (spiritual) state. There are those who are secure in themselves, and others who fear.

And this is the same as when a person who is secure about his own carnal appetite kisses his lawful (spouse) during the month of Ramadan, while it is forbidden to the person who fears that his carnal appetite may lead him to intercourse, or who fears ejaculation from a mere kiss.

*THE SECOND CAUSE* is that the song be accompanied by viols, lutes, harps, or other stringed instruments, or the Iraqi flute. Stringed instruments have been prohibited, not because they are pleasing, for if a person plays with a displeasing sound and unrhythmically, they are still forbidden. (That is) because they are associated with winebibbers. Anything that is peculiar to them has been forbidden with the punishment of wine because it calls wine to mind and excites the desire for it.

However, drums, hautboys,<sup>949</sup> tambourines—even if they have little bells—are not forbidden and no Traditions have come down to us

<sup>948</sup> From the AA text.

about this. These are not the same as stringed instruments, as they are not part of the rites of the wine-drinkers. Consequently, an analogy cannot be made between them. Indeed, tambourines were beaten in the presence of the Messenger (S) and he ordered that they be played at weddings. By adding the bells to them, they do not become forbidden. Beating drums is itself the custom of the Pilgrims and the warriors in defense of the faith. However, the drums of the eunuchs are unlawful, for that is their emblem. It is a long drum with a narrow middle and the broad ends.

As for the hautboy, whether the bell is down or up, it is not forbidden, as it was the habit of the shepherds to play them. Shafi'i (R) says: "The proof that the hautboy is lawful is that when the sound of the hautboy came to the ears of the Messenger (S), he put his fingers in his ears and said to Ibn 'Umar: 'Listen! When it is over, let me know.' Therefore, he gave Ibn 'Umar permission to listen; that is the proof that it is lawful. However, the putting of his fingers in his ears is the proof that the Messenger (S) was in a noble and august state and he knew that its sound would distract him. For, music has an effect in the exciting of the yearning for God Most High, transporting the person closer (to God) who is not in the heart of that work. This is very important in augmenting the weak who do not have this state themselves. As for the person who has the state, it may be that music distract him and become a loss for him. Consequently, not performing music is not proof of its being forbidden, for there are many lawful things from which (people) refrain. Moreover, commanding it is absolute proof of its lawfulness, for which there is no other aspect.

*THE THIRD CAUSE* is that there be some obscenity in the song or satire, or that there be some sarcasm directed at the religious, such as the verses recited by the heretics with respect to the Companions. Or, it may contain the description of famous women, for describing women to men is not lawful. Reciting and listening to all of these verses is forbidden. However, it is not forbidden to recite or listen to verses describing the character of locks, moles, and beauty, or speak of union and separation, as is the custom of lovers. It becomes forbidden when a person in his own thoughts transfers it to a woman he loves or to a youth. Then, his thoughts are unlawful. But, if his own wife or slave girl sings, it is not forbidden.

As for the Sufis and those persons who are immersed in the love for God Most High and who sing about this, such verses cause no harm. They take a meaning for each one of those that is in accordance with their state. They may understand "locks" to refer to the darkness of the grave and understand the brightness of the face to refer to the brightness

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<sup>949</sup> "hautboy" (*shāhīn*): an old instrument from which the modern oboe is descended.

of faith. Or, they may understand the locks as the chain of the forms of the Divine Presence, as the poet says:

I said I would count the ends of one curl of thy hair  
     So that by separating one I might estimate all;  
     She laughed at me; the end of one little black curl  
         She twisted once, and I lost count.

They understand the lock of hair as the chain of forms. A person who wishes to come to know the marvels of the Divine Presence by the application of reason to it or by the end of one hair, one twist will cause him to miscount and bring all of his intellectual powers to confusion. When there is talk of wine and drunkenness in poetry, it is not to be understood by its external meaning. As is said, for example:

If thou measurest wine by two thousand cups,  
     So long as thou dost not drink it thyself, thou wilt not be  
         seized with frenzy.

They understand from this that the work of religion will not be accomplished by talk and learning. Rather, it will be done by immediate experience. If thou talkest much about love, passion, asceticism, trust, and other such concepts, and if thou writest them in books and blacken many pages doing so, there will be no benefit until thou changest into that character. That which is said about taverns and inns, they understand differently. As is said, for example:

Whoever has not frequented the taverns is without faith,  
     For the taverns are the principles of faith.

They interpret "tavern" to mean the ruin<sup>950</sup> of the attributes of human nature. The principles of religion are that those attributes which are cultivated become destroyed so that that which is unborn in the essence of a human being may be born and cultivated.

An explanation of their understanding is lengthy, for each person has a different understanding, according to his own opinion. But the reason for saying this is that a group of fools and a group of innovators<sup>951</sup> speak about them vulgarly: "They talk about idols, locks, moles, drunkenness, and taverns and they listen (to the verses). This is forbidden!" They suppose that what they have said is in itself a great argument. Their sarcasm is iniquitous, as they have no knowledge of (the

<sup>950</sup> A play on words: *Kharābāt* may mean "ruins" or "tavern, a house of ill repute." The Arabic root *kh-r-b* means "ruin, destruction." A tavern (*kharābāt*) is a place of ruination.

<sup>951</sup> "innovators" (*mubtadi'ān*): or, "heretics."

Sufis') state. Rather, (the Sufis') song itself does not reside in the literal meaning of the verse, which is merely a sound, for they are affected by listening to the sound of the hautboy, even though it has no meaning. It is for this reason that those persons who do not know Arabic are affected by listening to Arabic verses. The fools laugh: "He himself does not know Arabic! What is he going into a trance about?" These fools do not even know this much, that a camel does not understand Arabic, but it happens that because of the tone and singing of the Arab, though it is tired, it will run while carrying a heavy burden so that it will reach the destination by reason of the strength from the music and its energy. When the music stops, it will fall dead at that very instant. These fools should argue and exchange views with that camel: "Thou dost not know Arabic! What is this joy that has appeared in thee?"<sup>952</sup>

It may also be that one understands something of the Arabic verses that are not their meaning, but what one imagines them to be. Their object is not a commentary on the verses. Someone used to say: "Why art thou doing this when thou thyself do not know what they are saying?" The other replied: "What dost thou mean I do not know? He is saying: 'We are wretched.' He is speaking the truth. We are all wretched. We are helpless. We are in danger."

So, let their music be thus. Whoever's soul has been dominated and overcome by some affair—whatever he listens to, all he hears is that; whatever he sees, all he sees is that. A person who has never experienced the fire of love, whether true or false, will not comprehend this.

*THE FOURTH REASON* is that the listener be young and dominated by carnal passion, not knowing what the love for God itself is. Usually when he hears talk of locks, moles, and beautiful faces, Satan places his foot on his neck and excites his lust and makes the love of the beautiful attractive to his heart. He listens to the states of lovers and he, too, is delighted by them and entertains hopes and gets up in search of that until he too embarks upon the way of love.

There are many women and men in the garb of the Sufis who have become engaged in this work. Then they excuse themselves for this with the language and the fashion of idle talk, saying: "So-and-so has been seized with love and passion; a leaf has fallen in his path." And they say: "Love is the net of God; he has been caught in the net." And they say: "Holding back one's heart and striving to see one's beloved is a great blessing." They call pimping elegance and good-naturedness. They call sin and sodomy passion and love. It may be that they are making excuses for themselves: "Our spiritual guide looks favorably upon such-

<sup>952</sup> "Thou dost not...appeared in thee?" These sentences are, of course, written in sarcasm.

and-such a boy; this always happens in the way of the great. It is not sodomy, for it is play with the beautiful." It may be that they say: "It is the essence of soul-play." They again propose this kind of humbug together so as to conceal their own degradation with such nonsense. Whoever does not believe that this is forbidden and sinful is a libertine. (Shedding) his blood is lawful.

Whatever has been related about spiritual guides who admired boys is either a lie or self-justification. If one has looked (upon a boy), it was not out of carnal lust. Rather, it was in the way of a person who looks at a red apple or a blossom. Or, it may be that even a spiritual guide has made a mistake and is not chaste. Should a spiritual guide be in error or commit a sin, that sin is (still) not permissible.

They have related a tale and a story about David<sup>953</sup> (A) in this vein so that thou not think that no one is safe from such minor sins, even if he be great. His eulogizing, weeping, and repentance have been related so that thou *not* citest (his sin) as a proof and excuse for thyself.

There is another reason—and it is rare—that there be the person to whom, when he is in that state which the Sufis have, things are shown. It may be that angelic essences and the spirits of the prophets be disclosed to them by a representation. Then, that disclosure is in a human form of extreme beauty, so that the representation will certainly be suited to the true nature of the sublime reality. Since that reality is the most perfect—amongst the sublime realities of the souls—its representation from (the viewpoint of) the visible world is the most beautiful.

Amongst the Arabs, there was no one more handsome than Dihyah Kalbi<sup>954</sup> and the Messenger (S) used to see Gabriel in his likeness. So, it may be that something of that (kind) may be disclosed in the form of a handsome youth and that he be very pleasing. When one returns from that state, the sublime reality is again veiled and one begins to fall into a yearning and search for the sublime reality of which that form was the representation. It may be that he not find that sublime reality again. Then, if one's external eye falls upon a handsome face that has some resemblance to that (lost) form, the state is revived in one, and

<sup>953</sup> This perhaps a reference to the story of the sin of David and Bathsheba found in the Bible (2 Sam. 11:1-27). However, if the comment is taken as following directly from the preceding paragraph, it may refer to the oath of brotherly love between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul, although there is nothing to suggest that it was tainted by any impropriety. In his lament at the death of Jonathan, David says (quite openly): "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." (2 Sam 1:26) The simple anguish expressed in this verse, not unusual for its time, may have offered some cause for speculation in later times.

<sup>954</sup> Dihyah Kalbi: Dihyah bin Khalifah al-Kalbi, one of the Companions. He carried the Prophet's letter to Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, inviting him to Islam.

one regains that sublime reality that had been lost. Then, one is overcome by an ecstatic state.

Therefore, it is lawful that a person show a desire to see that handsome face in order to regain that state. However, the person who has no knowledge of these mysteries, when he sees (the other's) desire (to gaze upon the handsome face), he thinks that (that person) is doing so for a reason of the same nature as he would have, for he himself has no knowledge of the other. In summary, the work of the Sufis is a great work of awareness and is extremely obscure. Upon no path are so many errors found as upon this one.

This much has been mentioned in order to make plain that (true Sufis) are oppressed when people think that they are of the nature of those (Sufis) who have appeared in this era. In truth, that person is oppressed who thinks like this, for he has oppressed himself by impugning them or comparing them with others.

*THE FIFTH REASON* is that the common folk become accustomed to music in the manner of a pleasure and an amusement, and this is permitted, but on the condition that they not make it a vocation, and that they take care that though many sins are minor, when they are many, they reach the level of a major sin. Some things are permitted, provided that they are occasional and few. When they become many, they become forbidden. The blacks played one time in a mosque and the Prophet (S) did not forbid that, but if they had converted the mosque into a theater, he would have forbidden that. He did not stop 'Ayishah from watching them, but if a person makes it a vocation to go about with them, it is not lawful. Making jokes from time to time is lawful, but if a person habitually does this, he becomes an object of ridicule and this is inappropriate.

#### PART TWO: CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC AND ITS RULES OF CONDUCT

Know that there are three stations in music: first, understanding; second, ecstasy; and third, motion. There is something to be said about each one:

*THE FIRST STATION* concerns understanding. As for the person who participates in the music naturally and heedlessly, or out of some thought for some creature, he is more despicable than that one should discuss his understanding and state.

As for him who usually thinks about religion and the love of God Most High, there are two degrees:

*THE FIRST DEGREE* is the disciple whose states vary in the search and traversing of his path—from grasping and letting go, ease and

difficulty, and the indications of acceptance and the indications of rejection. His whole soul may have become occupied with that. When he hears words in which there is talk of rebuke and acceptance, union and separation, proximity and distance, satisfaction and discontent, hope and hopelessness, security and fear, keeping one's word and breaking it, the happiness of attainment and the sorrow of separation—and things of this sort—he applies them to his own states. That which is inside him catches fire. Different states appear in him and he falls into various thoughts. If the basis of his knowledge and belief be not firm, it may happen that the thoughts of unbelief occur to him during the music, because he sings something about God, may He be glorified, which is absurd. As, for example, in this couplet:

From the beginning, there was an inclination to Thine I-ness;  
where is that inclination?  
And what is the reason for becoming wearied today?

Every disciple who is sharp and fluent in the beginning and then weakens supposes that God had had a care and inclination towards him but has now changed. To consider that change as being in God Most High is unbelief. Indeed, he must understand that God is not affected by change, for He is the Changer and is not subject to change. He must understand that his own character changes until that sublime reality which had been open (to him) becomes veiled. It is like the sun, whose light is lavished generously (upon one), unless he goes behind a wall and thereby becomes hidden from it. The change is in him, not in the sun. He should say:

The sun has risen, O beloved! It is late  
If it does not shine upon my head, it is a misfortune.

He should attribute the veil to his own misfortune and an error he has committed, not to God Most High. The point of this simile is that one must understand that whatever qualities of deficiency and alteration there are, are one's own and in one's own self. One should understand that whatever majesty and beauty there is in existence is in God Most High. If one does not have this capital of knowledge, one quickly falls into unbelief and does not realize it. For this reason, the danger of music to one's love of God Most High is tremendous.

*THE SECOND DEGREE* is that when one has passed the level of the disciples and has put the states and preliminaries behind him, he will have reached the end of that state which is called "annihilation" or "non-

existence”<sup>955</sup> when applied to everything save God. When applied to God is it called “Unity” and “Oneness.”<sup>956</sup> The listening to music by this person it not in the way of understanding the sublime reality. Rather, when the music touches him, that state of non-existence and oneness is renewed. He becomes completely absent from himself and unaware of this world. He might, for example, fall into a fire and not realize it, just as Shaykh Abu al-Hasan Nuri (R) danced during the music to a place where reeds were cut from a field. His feet were all cut up and slashed, but he was unaware of it. His dance was more fulfilling.

However, the dance of the disciples is mixed with the attributes of humanity. This is that it takes him back totally from himself, as was the case with the women when they saw Joseph (A). They all forgot themselves and cut their hands. Thou shouldest not deny this non-existence and (as a result) say: “I see him.”<sup>957</sup> How has he become non-existent?” That which thou seest is not he! For, thou wilt still see that person when he dies, though he has become non-existent.<sup>958</sup> The truth is that that reality is sublime, at the level of spiritual knowledge. However, since the knowledge of all things has left him, everything has become nothing for him. Since he is also unaware of himself, with respect to himself, he has become non-existent and nothing remains save the remembrance of God Most High. Everything that was perishable has departed; the eternal remains.

Therefore, the meaning of oneness is that since one sees naught but God Most High, one says: “The self is all He and I am not.” Or one says: “I myself am He!” Some people make a mistake here and have interpreted this as incarnation<sup>959</sup> and others have interpreted this as union.<sup>960</sup> It is as though a person has never seen a mirror. He looks into one and sees his own face! He supposes that he has alighted in the mirror and that he himself is that which appears red and white. If he thinks that he has entered the image, that is incarnation. If he thinks that the image itself has become his form, that is union. Both are erroneous. On the contrary, the image never becomes the form and the form never becomes the image—but it seems so—and a person who has not come to know matters completely (erroneously) supposes (that the image has become his form). The discussion of this in a book such as this is difficult, for the study of this is lengthy.

<sup>955</sup> “annihilation”: Ar. *fānā*; “non-existence”: Per. *nisti*. They are virtually synonymous.

<sup>956</sup> “Unity”: Ar. *Tawhid*; “Oneness”: Per. *Yagānagi*. They are virtually synonymous.

<sup>957</sup> “him”: the person in the state of annihilation to himself, but visible to the world.

<sup>958</sup> That is, you see his body. You still see the body when he dies, but he is non-existent. The essential component, his soul, has departed.

<sup>959</sup> “incarnation”: *hulūl*.

<sup>960</sup> “union”: *ittihād*.

THE SECOND STATION is a state that manifests itself after one has mastered understanding. It is called "ecstasy."<sup>961</sup> Ecstasy is finding. That means that one has found a state which he has not had before. There has been much said about what the true nature of that state is. The correct view is that it is not of a single kind. Rather, it is of many different kinds. However, there are two categories: one is of the category of states and the other is of the category of revelations:

*AS FOR THE STATES,*<sup>962</sup> it is as though one of one's attributes conquers one and one becomes as though drunk. That attribute is sometimes intense yearning, sometimes fear, sometimes the fire of love, sometimes the quest, sometimes a kind of sorrow, and sometimes a kind of regret. But, when that fire conquers the soul, its smoke overcomes the brain. One's senses are overwhelmed. As a result, one does not see or hear, as though one were asleep. Or, if one sees and hears, one is absent and unheeding as though one were drunk.

*THE OTHER KIND IS REVELATIONS.*<sup>963</sup> These begin to appear—of those that the Sufis have—some in the garb of an allegory, others direct. The effect of the whirling dance on that person is of the nature of a purification of the soul, like the cleaning of a mirror that has dust on it. The image in it then appears.

Everything that may be interpreted in this sublime reality is a knowledge, an analogy, a metaphor. Its true nature is not known to anyone other than to him who experiences it. Then, one's own station is manifest to every person. If he affects another, he does it by the analogy to his own station. Whatever is by analogy is a leaf of knowledge, not a leaf of personal experience.

So, this much has been said so that those persons who have not experienced this state may indeed believe in it and not deny it. For, that denial causes one loss. The person is extremely foolish who thinks that whatever he does not find in his own cupboard cannot be found in the treasury of kings. More foolish is that person who—despite his own triviality—considers himself a king and says: "I myself have attained everything and all has become mine. Whatever is not mine, is itself non-existent." All denials arise from these two types of foolishness.

Know that there is an ecstasy which is forced. It is the essence of hypocrisy, unless the reasons for it are to bring the soul forward by exertion so that the reality of ecstasy may appear. In the Traditions, it is related: "When ye hear the Quran recited, weep. If weeping does not come, exert yourselves." The significance of this is that one brings

<sup>961</sup> "ecstasy": *wajd*.

<sup>962</sup> "states": *aḥwāl*.

<sup>963</sup> "revelations": *mukāshafāt*. These are of a different and lower order than the revelations from God to a prophet, which are called *wahy*.

sorrow to the heart through exertion. This exertion has an effect and it may lead to truth.

**QUESTION:** If someone asks: "Since their whirling dance is truth and for God, reciters of the Quran should be seated in the assemblies and recite the Quran, not the professional singers<sup>964</sup> who sing songs, for the Quran is the Word of God. Yet the whirling dance takes precedence."

**ANSWER:** Much of the whirling dance is accompanied by the verses of the Quran, and ecstasy often appears from that. It often happens that (the dancers) faint from the whirling dance of the Quran. There have been many who have given up their lives in that dance. Relating that story would be lengthy, and we have related them in detail in the book, *The Revival*. However, the reasons for replacing the reciter of the Quran with the singer and replacing the Quran with song are five:

**THE FIRST (REASON)** is that not all of the verses of the Quran are related to the state of lovers, for in the Quran, there are the stories of the unbelievers, the judgment on the actions of the worldly, and many other things. For, the Quran is the remedy for all classes of people. When the reciter, for example, recites this verse: "A mother has one-sixth part of an inheritance and a sister one-half," or "If a woman's husband dies she must wait for a period of four months and ten days"—and there are many things like this—the fire of love is not also kindled in the lover, except for that person who is at the highest level of love and for whom there is a dance for everything, even if the intention (of the verses) is remote (from this); but that is exceptional.

**THE SECOND REASON** is that they have memorized much of the Quran and recited it frequently. Whatever is heard frequently will not inform the soul more in most conditions. Or, a verse which a person hears for the first time and achieves some state from, the second time that state is not present. A song may be repeated nine times, but the Quran cannot be read nine times. When the Arabs came during the time of the Messenger (S) and heard the Quran for the first time, they would weep and states would appear upon them. Abu Bakr (R) used to say: "*We were as ye were, then our hearts hardened.* We, too, were like you; now our hearts are hard." That is, he had become firm with the Quran and it had become a habit. Thus, whatever is new has a greater effect. It is for this that 'Umar (R) ordered the Pilgrim to return to his own land quickly. He said: "I fear that when they become familiar with the Ka'bah, suddenly their respect for it will depart from their hearts."

**THE THIRD REASON** is that most souls will not be swayed until excited by sweet tunes and rhythm. It is for this that whirling dance seldom occurs with speech. Rather, it occurs with a pleasing song, for it

<sup>964</sup> "singers": *qawwālān*, sing. *qawwāl*.

has rhythm and tone. Then, each melody or tune has (its own) effect. It is not proper to put the Quran into song, set it to music, or alter it. And since it is without tune, it resembles plain speech, except if a flame be hot and it burns with that.

*THE FOURTH REASON* is that the tune also must be given some assistance with other voices, such as flutes, tambourines, hautboys, drums, et al., to increase the effect. This has the form of an amusement, while the Quran is the essence of seriousness. It must be protected from being linked with anything that, in the view of the common folk, has the appearance of jocularity. The Messenger (S) went to the house of Rubayya' the daughter of Mu'awwidh. The servant girls were striking tambourines and singing. When they saw him, they began to sing his praise in verses. He said: "Stop that! Sing what ye were singing before." For, praising him is the essence of seriousness and more precious than that they sing it to the accompaniment of tambourines. This has the appearance of an amusement and is not appropriate.

*THE FIFTH REASON* is that for each person there is a condition that is eager to hear a verse suited to his own state. If it is not, it is repugnant to him and he may say: "Do not sing that, sing something else." It is not proper to put the Quran in such a situation that it appears displeasing. It may be that all of its verses are not suited to everyone. Therefore, if the couplet is not agreeable to one, one may interpret it in conformity to one's own state. It is not necessary that one understand from the poetry that which the poet had intended. However, it is not proper that thou interpret the Quran according to thine own whim and alter the meaning of the Quran.

Therefore, the reason for the choice of the singer by the shaykhs was this that has been said, and the result of this circumstance for two reasons: one is the weakness of the listener, and the other is honoring the sanctity of the Quran so that it not be touched by alteration and speculation.

*THE THIRD STATION* is that the whirling dance<sup>965</sup> is motion, dancing, and rending of garments. One is not held culpable for whatever overcomes one and is spontaneous. Whatever (a person) does knowingly to show off to people untruthfully that he has attained a state which he does not have is forbidden. This is pure hypocrisy.

Abu al-Qasim Nasrabadi<sup>966</sup> says: "It is better for these people to be busy with the whirling dance than to be backbiting." Abu 'Amr bin

<sup>965</sup> "whirling dance": *samā'*. See Note 942 above.

<sup>966</sup> Abu al-Qasim Nasrabadi: Abū al-Qāsim Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad bin Mahmūd al-Naṣrābādī. A disciple of Shibli (see Note 1067), he was a 4th Islamic (10th CE) century master of the later shaykhs of Khorasan.

Nujayd<sup>967</sup> said: "If they backbite for thirty years, it is better than their displaying a false state in the whirling dance."

Know that it is more perfect that one attend the whirling dance and remain still, so that it does not appear on one's exterior and that one has such strength that one can restrain oneself, for that movement and those cries and sobs are all from weakness. However, such strength is rare.

Indeed, the meaning of that which Abu Bakr (R) said: "*We were as ye were, then our hearts hardened*" is that (they were) hardened with strength, so that "we have the power to restrain ourselves." That person who cannot restrain himself will necessarily never reach (the stage) in which his exterior does not alter and he may restrain himself.

A young man was in the company of Junayd (R). When he attended the whirling dance, he cried out. Junayd said: "If thou doest that again thou wilt not remain with me." So, with a great effort, he remained calm until one day he had restrained himself so much that he had no more power (to do so). Finally, he cried out, his belly split open, and he received the command.<sup>968</sup>

If a person does not exhibit a state by himself and dances until he forces himself into weeping, it is lawful. The dance which the blacks in the mosque were dancing when 'Ayishah was watching is permissible.

The Messenger (S) said to 'Ali: "Thou art of me and I am of thee." 'Ali was delighted and danced, striking his feet on the ground several times as is the custom of the Arabs when they are overjoyed and happy. He said to Ja'far (R): "Thou resemblest me in appearance and temperament." He, too, danced with joy. He said to Zayd bin Harithah: "Thou art our brother and client,"<sup>969</sup> and he danced with joy.

If someone says that (dancing) is forbidden, he errs. Indeed, the worst of this is that it is play, and playing is not forbidden. And as for the person who does it in order to strengthen that state which appears in his soul, that is in itself praiseworthy.

Tearing one's clothes deliberately is not proper as it is a waste of property. However, when one is overcome (by the state), it is permissible, however much the tearing of clothing may be deliberate. But, it is possible that in that (state), the will be compelled so much that if one does not want to do it, one cannot (restrain oneself). The moans of

<sup>967</sup> Abū 'Amr bin Nujayd: a disciple of Abū 'Uthmān al-Hīrī, he was the maternal grandfather and teacher of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad bin al-Husayn al-Azdi al-Sulami al-Nishaburi. He died AH366/976CE.

<sup>968</sup> That is, he died.

<sup>969</sup> Ja'far (bin Abi Talib): a cousin of the Prophet (S). Zayd bin Harithah: Sold into slavery as a child, he was bought by Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet, and given to him. The Prophet manumitted him and was very fond of him. Both men were martyred in the battle of Mu'tah, AH8/629CE.

the sick person are voluntary, but if he wishes not to do so, he cannot. A person cannot restrain himself at all times from everything that is voluntary and deliberate, for when he is overcome, he cannot be restrained.

As for the deliberate tearing to pieces of garments by the Sufis and distributing the pieces, there are some who have opposed this (saying) that it is not appropriate and it is an error. Yet, heavy cloth is also cut into pieces in order to make shirts, but since there is no loss and the cloth is cut up for a purpose, it is lawful. It is the same with making the pieces square. That is done for a purpose so that all may have a part of it, and sewing it upon prayer rugs and a garment is lawful. If a person cuts a piece of cloth into a hundred pieces and gives one to (each of) a hundred poor people, it is permissible, when each piece is (so cut as) to be of use.

#### THE RULES OF THE CONDUCT OF THE WHIRLING DANCE

Know that three things must be observed during the whirling dance: the time, the place, and the brethren:

Any TIME the soul is engaged, or it is the time for an obligatory formal prayer, or it is the time for a meal, or at a time when the soul is distracted for some reason, the whirling dance is useless.

As for the PLACE, if it is a place of public passage, or an unpleasant and dark place, or the house of an unjust person, it will always be distracted.

As for the BRETHREN, it is that all who are present must be devotees of the whirling dance. If some arrogant, worldly person be present, or a disapproving holy man be present at the assembly, or a dissimulator who always dissimulates in his state and dance; or if some of the heedless be present whose dancing is based upon false ideas or who are busy with senseless talk and staring everywhere without respect; or some women who come to watch—and among them there are young persons whose thoughts are not devoid of each other—such dancing will lead to nothing. This is the meaning of what Junayd has said: "In the whirling dance, the time, the place, and the brethren are the conditions."

As for sitting in a place where the young women are visible and there are young men—of the heedless who are overcome by carnal appetite—it is forbidden, because at this time the dance heats up the fire of carnal appetite from both sides. Whoever looks at some spot with a carnal appetite, it may be that his soul is also attracted. That becomes the seed of much sin and corruption. Such a whirling dance is never proper.

Therefore, when the people who are its devotees sit for the dance, the first rule is that they bow their heads and not look at one another. Each person devotes his entire self to (the dance) and does not speak during it, nor does he drink water. He does not look from side to

side and he does not move his hands and head. He makes no deliberate movement. Indeed, he sits politely, just as he sits at the Testimony in formal prayer.<sup>970</sup> His soul is with God Most High and he waits for whatever revelations appear from the unseen because of the dance. He restrains himself from rising deliberately and making movements.

When a person rises due to the assaults of ecstasy, they accompany him. If his turban falls off, they lay aside theirs. All of this, though it is innovation and has not been handed down from the Companions or the Followers, yet it is not such an innovation as to be inappropriate, for many innovations are good. Shafi'i (R) says: "Performing the night formal prayer<sup>971</sup> during Ramadan congregationally was instituted by 'Umar bin Khattab (R). This innovation is good." So, objectionable innovations are those which are in opposition to a Practice (of the Prophet). A pleasing temperament and making people happy is praiseworthy in the Law. For every people there is a custom, the opposition to which is considered by them to be ill nature (in its opponents') character. The Messenger (S) said: "*People have been created according to their natures.*" Ye live with every person according to his habits and nature. When these people are made happy by this agreement, they are driven away from opposition to this. Being agreeable to them is a Practice of the Prophet. The Companions did not rise to their feet for the Messenger (S), because he disliked that. But, in the place where it is the custom, where not rising is frowned upon, rising to please is preferable. The custom of the Arabs is one thing; the custom of the non-Arabs is another.

<sup>970</sup> That is, he sits quietly upon his heels without moving, as he does at the conclusion of formal prayer.

<sup>971</sup> "night formal prayer": *tarāwīḥ*.

## CHAPTER NINE: ENJOINING GOOD AND PROHIBITING WRONG

This is a pivot of the pivots of religion because all of the prophets were sent with this. Should it become obliterated and depart from mankind, all the characteristics of the Religious Law would become nullified.

We shall explain the knowledge of this in three parts: First, concerning Its Necessity; Second, concerning the Prerequisites of Safeguarding Public Morality; Third, concerning Wrong Deeds, most of which are of Habit.

### PART ONE: CONCERNING ITS NECESSITY

Know that enjoining good<sup>972</sup> and prohibiting wrong<sup>973</sup> is a duty. Whoever abandons this in an untimely manner without justification is a rebel (against God), as God Most High says: *And let there be from you a nation who invite to goodness and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency.* (Q. 3:104) He commands and He says: “There must be a group of you whose work it is that they invite people to goodness and enjoin the good and restrain the wrong.” This is the proof that (doing) this is a religious obligation, but it is a collective obligation; for when a group sets out to do this, it is sufficient<sup>974</sup> (to fulfill the obligation). However, if they do not, all the people become sinners. And He says: *Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-tax and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity.* (Q. 22:41) (In this verse), He placed enjoining good together with formal prayer and paying the poor-tax, and He mentioned the religious as having those qualities.

The Messenger (S) said: “Enjoin that which is good; if ye do not, God Most High will appoint the worst of you over you and give him power. Then, if even the best of you supplicates (God), He will not hear that.” (Abu Bakr) the Truly Righteous (R) relates that the Messenger (S) said: “There is no people among whom sin is current, and its rejection not, to whom God Most High is not about to send a punishment upon all.” The Messenger (S) said: “All good deeds when compared with

<sup>972</sup> “enjoining good”: *amr-i ma’rūf*.

<sup>973</sup> “prohibiting wrong”: *nahy-yi munkar*.

<sup>974</sup> “sufficient” (Ar *kifāyat*): *fard-i kifāyat* literally means “religious obligation of sufficiency.” It is a general obligation for the community and can be transferred from one person to another, not an individual obligation (*fard-i ‘ayn*), which normally cannot be performed by another, such as fasting and formal prayer. However, if no one undertakes the collective obligation, the whole community becomes guilty of neglecting a command of God.

fighting in defense of Islam are like a drop of water in a vast sea. And it is like that when comparing fighting in defense of Islam with enjoining the good and forbidding the evil." And he (S) said: "All the words that a person speaks are against him save those he utters in enjoining good and prohibiting evil, and in the remembrance of God Most High."

And he (S) said: "God Most High does not punish the guiltless elite because of the common folk except in the case where they see some evil which they are able to prevent, yet remain silent." And he (S) said: "Do not stand at a place where a person is killed or beaten unjustly, for curses rain down upon the person who witnesses that and is able to prevent it, but does not." And he (S) said: "One ought not to remain at a place where something improper is taking place without intervening. For, that intervention<sup>975</sup> does not bring his destiny any closer, nor does it decrease his sustenance." The proof of this is that in the habitations of the unjust and places where there is evil—and it is not possible to interdict it—it is not right to intervene without necessity. It was for this reason that many of the forefathers took to seclusion, as they did not find the markets and highways free from wrong.

The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever is present when a sin is committed and loathes it, it is as though he were absent. If it takes place in his absence and he agrees to it, then it as though it were done in his presence." And he (S) said: "There was never a messenger (from God) who did not have disciples—that is, Companions—who did not do his work after him with the Book of God and Practice (of the Prophet) until the time after them that some people appeared who mounted the pulpits and spoke fine words, but committed filthy deeds. It is the right and religious obligation incumbent upon every believer to fight against them by hand; if one is not able, then in words. And if one is not able, in his heart; there is no Islam beyond this." And he (S) said: "God Most High sent a revelation to an angel: 'Overturn such-and-such a city.' (The angel) said: 'O Lord God, how can I do this when such-and-such a

<sup>975</sup> "intervention": *hisbat*: This word comes from an Arabic root *h-s-b* meaning "accounting, counting," etc. It came to refer to virtuous acts in this life which would add to the count of spiritual rewards in the next life. Forbidding or speaking out against wrongdoing or acts contrary to public morality were among the virtuous deeds that would add to spiritual merit. This became institutionalized with the Arab conquests in the 1st Islamic (7th CE) century of the formerly Byzantine territories of Egypt, Syria (including Palestine), and Iraq. The Umayyad Arabs took over the Byzantine market inspector, calling him *‘āmil al-sūq* (prefect of the market). "At a later stage he was entrusted with the peculiarly Islamic function of *hishba*, or the duty of safeguarding the proper standards of public morality." (N. J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, Vol. 2 of *Islamic Surveys*, [Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1964] p. 28.) This officer was now called *muhtasib*, the guardian of public morality, his function *ihtisāb*, the guardianship of public morality. This function is still carried out with official sanction, in a somewhat different form, in several Muslim countries, notably Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan.

person who has never committed a sin by even a winking of the eye is in there.' (God) said: 'Do it, for he never once frowned at the sins of others.'"

'Ayishah (R) relates: "The Messenger (S) said: 'God punishes all the inhabitants of a land in which there were 17,000 men whose deeds were like the deeds of the prophets.' They asked: 'Why, O Messenger of God?' He said: "Because they were not angry at others for the sake of God Most High and they did not forbid their conduct."

Abu 'Ubaydah Jarrah says: "I said to the Messenger: 'Who is superior to the martyrs?' He replied: 'The person who chastises a tyrannical ruler for lapses against public morality until (the ruler) slays him. If he is not slain, nothing more will be recorded against him, no matter how long he lives.'"

It is related in the Traditions that God Most High sent a revelation to Joshua (A) the son of Nun: "I shall destroy a hundred thousand men of thy people; forty thousand righteous men and sixty thousand sinning men." (Joshua) asked: "O Lord God, why wouldst Thou destroy the good men?" He answered: "Because they have not been inimical to the others and have not refrained from eating, associating, and doing business with them."

## PART TWO: CONCERNING THE CONDITIONS OF SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC MORALITY

Know that guarding public morality<sup>976</sup> is obligatory upon all Muslims, and knowledge of its conditions is necessary; it cannot be passed over. This guarding has four elements: one is the guard, another concerns that which is safeguarded; another is the person subject to the discipline of guardianship,<sup>977</sup> and the last is the manner of safeguarding public morality.

THE FIRST ELEMENT is the guardian. His<sup>978</sup> qualifications are no more than that he be a Muslim and that he be authorized. For, the guardianship implements the rights of Islam. Whoever is religious is a guardian of public morality. There is disagreement as to whether being

<sup>976</sup> "public morality": *hisbat*. See previous Note (Note 975).

<sup>977</sup> The second and third elements are reversed in both texts at my disposal. I have taken the liberty of reversing them in accordance with their order in the text that follows.

<sup>978</sup> We must remind the reader that the pronouns "his" and "he," etc. are employed according to the rule of the indefinite masculine used as a singular to represent either sex when sex is not specified, as noted in the Translator's Introduction. Persian pronouns do not specify sex and when the specification is necessary other phrases are used such as "that/this man, that/this woman," etc. Arabic pronouns, however, are either masculine or feminine in form, as in English.

just and an appointment by a ruler are conditions or not. In our opinion, the correct view is that they are not.

*AS FOR JUSTICE AND CHASTITY:* How can being just and chaste be prerequisites? If someone is to guard the public morality who has never sinned, the guardianship itself will never be carried out, for no one is entirely innocent. Sa'id bin Jubayr (R) says: "If we must execute the guardianship only when we have not sinned, then we shall never be able to do so." Hasan Basri (R) was told: "A person says: 'Do not summon the people (to God) before ye first purify yourselves completely.'" (Hasan then) said: "Satan is in the hope of nothing more than that he be able to insert such words into our hearts so as to shut the gate of safeguarding public morality."

The judgment concerning this problem is that there are two kinds of guardianship:

The first is by advice and preaching. Whoever does bad deeds (himself) and says to another: "Do not do that!" or offers guidance, has no benefit other than that he is laughed at, for his preaching will be without any (beneficial) effect. This type of guardianship is not appropriate for the sinner. Moreover, he becomes an offender because, as he knows that he will not be listened to and that he will be ridiculed, this will void the grace of preaching and the majesty of the Religious Law in the eyes of the people. This is the reason that the preaching of the learned whose sins have been exposed is injurious to the public. In this regard, the Messenger (S) said: "That night when I was carried to heaven, I saw some people whose lips were being cut with fiery nail scissors. I asked: 'Who are ye?' They answered: 'We are those who enjoin the good, but did not ourselves accomplish it. We prohibited the wrong, but we did not refrain from it.' It was revealed to Jesus (A): "O son of Mary, first counsel thyself; if thou acceptest it, then counsel others; if not, be ashamed before Me."

The other kind of implementing the guardianship is by fist and compulsion, such as by spilling out wine, smashing harps and viols, and preventing by force someone bent upon some corruption. This is also lawful for the sinner, because there are two things obligatory upon every person: that he himself not do it, and the other is that he not permit another do it. If one (ignores this obligation), why should not another? If someone says: "It is unbecoming for some (man) who has silken garments<sup>979</sup> to act as the guardian of public morality and tear (silken cloth) off another person; or for (a person) who himself drinks wine to pour out the wine of another." The reply to this is: "Unbecoming is one thing, invalid is another. The latter is unbecoming because it is more

<sup>979</sup> Men are prohibited from wearing silk, but women are not, so this stipulation is meant for males.

important that it be abandoned, not because it is improper. If a person is fasting but does not perform the (obligatory) formal prayers, it is considered unbecoming. For, he does not do the more important, not because his fasting is improper and invalid; rather, because the prayer is more important." In the same way, acting is more important than commanding, but both are duties and one is not dependent upon the other. For, this leads to its being said: "One is obligated not to drink wine so long as one does not drink it." If he himself drinks, he is no longer obligated (to prevent others). This is absurd.

*AS FOR THE SECOND CONDITION*, seeking an appointment from the ruler and obtaining a writ for safeguarding public morality, it is not a condition. For, the great of the forefathers themselves rebuked kings and caliphs (for lapses of public morality), but the recounting of all that would be lengthy. The truth about this problem becomes clear when thou comest to know the degrees of guardianship. Guardianship has four degrees:

The first degree is advising and causing the fear of God Most High. This is itself a duty for all Muslims. What is the need of a (royal) mandate? The most meritorious of the acts of worship is that one counsel the ruler and cause him to fear God Most High.

The second degree is that of speaking sternly; to say, for example: "O sinner! Oppressor! O fool!" or: "O ignoramus! Dost thou not fear God that thou act thus?" All of these words are correct with respect to a sinner, and speaking the truth has no need of a mandate.

The third degree is physical prevention. Wine is poured out, viols smashed, silk turbans torn off heads. These are all like worship and are a duty. All that we have related in the first part is proof that whoever is a believer has been given this authority by the Religious Law, without the command of the (temporal) ruler.

The fourth degree is scourging and the threat to scourge. It may be that people oppose this and one fall into the need of help and gathering people (in support). This may lead to turmoil if done without the permission of the ruler. It is preferable that this not be done without the order of the ruler.

It is not remarkable that the degrees of guardianship alter (according to circumstance). If a son<sup>980</sup> wants to rebuke his father (for morality), he cannot do more than offer counsel and be polite. Hasan Basri (R) says: "(The son) gives counsel. If (the parent) becomes angry, (the son) should be silent." However, saying such harsh things as "fool or ignoramus," and the like are not proper with one's father, much less beating him! It is not right to slay him, even though he be an unbeliever.

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<sup>980</sup> Or daughter. The Persian word *farzand*, like *child* in English, does not indicate gender.

In Islamic punishments, it is not proper for a son to beat his father, even if the son be an (official) whipper, so counseling is preferred. But, if it is possible, he should pour out wine or tear apart silken garments, return things which (the father) has accepted unlawfully to their rightful owners, break silver vessels, destroy pictures on walls, or do other things like that. It would appear to be lawful even though the father is angered, for doing this is a right and the father's anger is invalid. This is not interference with the father's person, as beating and scolding would be. It is possible for a person to say: "Because one's father will become very unhappy, it should not be done." As Hassan Basri (R) says: "If he will become angry, (the son) should remain silent and refrain from preaching to him."

Know that the moral rebuke of the slave to his master, the wife to her husband, the subject to the ruler is the same as the rebuke of the offspring to his parent. These rights are all definite and tremendous. However, the rebuke of the student to his teacher is easier, for that respect is only because of religion. Since he uses the knowledge he acquires from him, it is not impossible. Indeed, the learned person who does not practice his own knowledge has lowered the respect for himself and for his knowledge.

THE SECOND ELEMENT is that which is safeguarded. Know that a moral rebuke is lawful for any reprehensible act that is occurring, of which the guardian of public morals comes to know without spying and of which its reprehensibility is certain. There are four conditions obvious from all of this:

*THE FIRST CONDITION* is that it be reprehensible, even though it not be a sin, and even though it be a minor sin. If one sees an insane person or a child having intercourse with a beast, one must prevent it even though it is not called a sin because they are not responsible (for their actions), but because the deed itself is forbidden in the Law and an indecency. If one sees a madman drinking wine or a child destroying someone's property, he must also be stopped. And that which is a sin, even though it be minor, must be stopped, such as exposing the privates in the public bath, or following women with one's eyes, or standing with them in private, or wearing gold rings and silk clothing, or drinking water from a silver vessel, and other similar minor sins. All of these must be opposed on moral grounds.

*THE SECOND CONDITION* is that the sin be occurring. If a person has finished drinking wine, it is not proper to bother him after (the event), except with counsel. The punishment of whipping is the prerogative of the ruler. In the same way, if a person is bent upon drinking wine tonight, it is not proper to punish him, for it may happened that he not drink it. If he says: "I shall not drink (wine)," it is not right to suspect him. However, if one is alone with a woman, punishment for a

breach of public morality is appropriate even if adultery has not been committed, for being alone (in that situation) is itself a sin. Indeed, if one stands by the door of the women's public bath to wait until they come out, a punishment must be given, for standing (for such a purpose) is a sin.

*THE THIRD CONDITION* is that the sin be visible without investigation by the guardian of public morality. Spying is not proper. When a person goes into his house and closes the door, it is not proper to enter without his permission and seek to find out what he is doing. It is not proper to eavesdrop by the door or roof to hear the sound of a stringed instrument and then punish him. Rather, everything that God Most High conceals must be kept concealed, unless the sound of the instruments and the cries of the drunkards are heard outside. Then it is proper for the guardian of public morality to enter without permission and give punishment. If a sinner has something under his garment, and it may be supposed that it is wine, it is not proper to say: "Show us what thou hast!" as this is spying. As it is possible that it is not wine, one must ignore it. However, if one smells the wine, it is lawful to pour it out. If someone has a large lyre and the cloth (under which it is concealed) is thin so that from its shape one may know what it is, it is lawful to destroy it. If it is possible that it may be something else, one must ignore it.

We have already narrated the story of 'Umar (R) who once descended to a roof and saw a person with a woman and wine in the section on laws.<sup>981</sup> It is well-known that one day, while on the pulpit, he consulted with the Companions, saying: "What do you say if the imam sees a wrong thing with his own eye, is it lawful for him to implement the punishment of whipping?" They replied: "It would be lawful." 'Ali (R) said: "This is something for which God Most High has required two witnesses. It cannot be done by one person." He did not hold it correct that the imam should act, even with his personal knowledge, and he held it a duty to conceal it.

*THE FOURTH CONDITION* is that it be truly obvious that the thing is improper, not suspected or by judgment. Consequently, it is not lawful in the Shafi'i school to object to the marriage of a Hanafite without a guardian, or that he drink date-wine, or that he accept the redemption of proximity,<sup>982</sup> and the like. However, if a Shafi'ite marries without a guardian or drinks date-wine, it is lawful to object to this, for opposition to the founder of one's own school is never permissible for any person. Some have said: "Safeguarding the public morality with regard to wine, adultery, and pork is lawful; for their prohibition is agreed upon and

<sup>981</sup> See Part Two of Chapter Five in this Pillar.

<sup>982</sup> Redemption of proximity (*shuf'ah-yi jiwār*): The right of redemption in favor of a person whose possessions adjoin to a property offered for sale. (Steingass)

certain, and not by expert judgment." That is not correct, for the agreement of the researchers is that whoever does something that differs from his own expert judgment, or differs from the expert judgment of the founder of his school of law, is a sinner. Therefore, this is truly forbidden. Whoever uses his own judgment in ascertaining the direction of prayer, and turns his back upon the direction (arrived at by others) and performs the formal prayer, is a sinner, even if others suppose that he is correct. And those who say that it is lawful for each person pick and choose among the schools speak nonsense and should not be trusted. Indeed, each person is required to act according to his own judgment. When his opinion is that, for example, Shafi'i (R) is more learned, he has no excuse to oppose (Shafi'i's views), except mere carnal appetite.

As for the innovating heretic<sup>983</sup> who says that God has a physical body and that the Quran was created, or says that God Most High cannot be seen and the like, he should be punished (according to the rules of safeguarding public morality), even if a Hanafite or a Malikite would not do so, for the errors of these people are certain, but in religious jurisprudence an error cannot be determined to be certain (as they are opinions). However, this punishing of the heretic should be done in a country where the heretics are unusual and rare, and most of the inhabitants are of the Traditional School. If (the people) are of two groups and thou punishest the heretic, he may punish thee for a lapse in public morality too, and this may end in a riot. This is not appropriate except with an order and the power of the ruler of the time.

THE THIRD ELEMENT is the subject of the discipline (for breaches of public morality). Its condition is that he be responsible so that his (improper) actions may be considered sinful and that there be no restraint out of respect to prevent disciplining, such as the respect due a father which restrains (a son) from physical discipline or verbal abuse. However, we prevent the mad and children from indecencies, as has been said above, but that is not called "safeguarding public morality." Indeed, if we see an animal grazing in the crops of a Muslim, we stop it in order to preserve the property of Muslims. We are not required to do this unless it is easy and we ourselves do not incur any loss. But, if there is no loss or harm to ourselves, that much (to preserve) the rights of Muslims is a duty. Just as when a loss of property will be caused to another and a person has some more testimony (in that person's favor) and the distance is not great, it is incumbent upon him to go to that place (an offer testimony) on behalf of the rights of Muslims.

When a rational person ruins or wastes someone's property, it is an injustice and a sin. Even if he has some grievance, he should be

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<sup>983</sup> "heretic" (*mubtadi'*): or, "innovator" (in religion).

punished (for a breach of public morality). Restraining and preventing sin is not without trouble, but it must be endured out of necessity, unless that difficulty is unendurable or one is not up to it. The purpose of this disciplining is the expressing of Islamic mores; therefore, accepting trouble in this is a duty. For example, if there be a lot of wine in a place and it will exhaust a person to pour it out, it is (nonetheless) a duty. But if some sheep are eating many of the crops of Muslims and it will exhaust a person to drive them out, it is not a duty. One's own rights must be respected like the rights of others. One's life is one's right. One is not obliged to give it for the property of another. However, one is obliged to give (his life) for religion and to prevent sin.

(DETAILS OF THE CONDITIONS OF BEARING THE BURDEN  
OF SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC MORALITY)

It is not a duty to endure all kinds of difficulties in guarding public morality, for there is also a qualification. That qualification is that if a person is unable, he is excused and has no obligation other than the rejection in his heart. But, if he is not unable, but rather fears that he may be beaten, or he knows that his words will have no effect, there are four situations:

*ONE* is that he knows that they will beat him and they will not stop sinning. He is not obliged (to act), but it is permissible to chastise them verbally or physically and endure the injuries. Moreover, this obtains spiritual reward. It is related in the Traditions that there is no martyr superior to the person who chastises a ruler (for a lapse of public morality) and is slain for that.

*THE SECOND* is that he knows that he is able to prevent a sin and there is no fear; he is absolutely able (to do so). If he does not, he is a rebel (against God).

*THE THIRD* is that they will not stop sinning and are not able to beat him. Chastising verbally is a duty in order to honor the Law. Just as he is not unable to reject (the sin) in his heart, so he is not unable to do so verbally.

*THE FOURTH* is that he may stop the sin, but they will beat him if he suddenly throws a stone at a jug of wine to break it, or if he strikes a harp or a viol and breaks it. This is not obligatory. Rather, rejection and being patient is better and preferable. If a person says that God Most High has said: *And be not cast by your own hands into ruin*, (Q. 2:195) the reply is that which Ibn 'Abbas (R) gives: "That (verse) means that ye should spend (of your) property so that ye not be destroyed." Bara'

‘Azib<sup>984</sup> (R) says: “The meaning of that is that ye spend and ye repent. The repentance of whoever sins and then says: ‘I repent,’ will not be accepted.” ‘Ubaydah says: “That means that he sins and never does anything good after that.”

In summary, it is lawful for a Muslim to throw himself at the ranks of the unbelievers and fight until they kill him. This is throwing oneself into destruction, but there is a benefit in that for him. He too kills a person so that the unbelievers become disheartened and say: “Are all the Muslims as courageous as he?” There is a spiritual reward in that. However, it is not lawful for a blind person or a helpless person to throw himself upon the ranks of the unbelievers, for he will destroy himself uselessly.

In the same way, if the implementation of the chastisement for a breach of public morality be in a place where they will kill or torture him, without stopping (them) from their sinning, and the firmness which he displays in his faith will not dishearten the sinners and not increase anyone’s desire for the good, it is also not proper to endure injury uselessly. In this rule, there are two forms:

One is that one’s anxiety is from timidity and suspicion, and the other is that one is not afraid of being beaten, but is concerned about his rank, property, or the sorrow of relatives. As for the first, if one is fairly sure that he will be beaten, he is excused. If he is fairly sure that they will beat him, but there is a possibility that they will not, he will never be excused—this is a possibility and a suspicion—and does not remove the obligation to chastise. If he be in doubt, it is possible for us to say: “Acting to guard public morality is a duty and is not abrogated by (either) certainty or doubt.” It may be that we say: “Acting to guard public morality becomes incumbent in a place that is usually safe.”

There are other forms in which there is injury to property or one’s body, or one’s rank, relatives, or students; or there is the fear that one will be insulted, or there is a fear that the gates of worldly and religious usefulness be closed to one. There are many kinds of this, and for each one there is a judgment.

#### [FEAR OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC MORALITY FOR ONESELF]

There are two kinds of things that one may fear for oneself:

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<sup>984</sup> Bara’ ‘Azib: Barā’ bin ‘Āzib bin al-Ḥārith al-Awsī al-Anṣārī, a Companion of the Prophet who later conquered Rhages (modern Rayy near Tehran) and Qazwin in Iran. He was a partisan of ‘Ali and retired to Kufah where he died AH72/691-2CE.

*ONE (KIND)* is that one fears that he may be deprived of something in the future, as in the case if he should chastise his teacher for a lapse of public morality, (the teacher) may make some omission in instructing him. If he chastises a physician for a lapse of public morality, (the physician) may omit something in curing his illness. If he chastises his master, (the master) may withhold his salary, or is some affair occurs, (the master) may not protect him. One cannot be excused (from the responsibility of safeguarding the public morality) for any of this, for this is not injurious. Indeed, this fear of losing some increase is for the future.

However, if at the time when one is needy, such as falling ill, and the doctor is wearing silk, and if one rebukes him (for that), he may not attend one; or, perhaps one is poor, helpless, and does not have the strength of resignation (to God), and there is no one other than one person who pays for one's sustenance, and if one rebukes him, he may withhold that money; or if one is helpless in the hands of a wicked person and he is the one person who protects him—these needs are immediate. It is not impossible that we allow a person with these excuses to remain silent, for the injury will appear immediately. However, the degree of injury changes with circumstances and is dependent upon one's reflection and informed judgment. One must examine one's own faith and be careful not to refrain from executing the guardianship of public morality unnecessarily.

*THE SECOND KIND* is that one fears that he may lose something he has obtained, such as knowing that property will be taken or his house destroyed, or he may lose the soundness of his body because they will beat him, or he may lose his rank because they will carry him out of market bareheaded,<sup>985</sup> even if they do not beat him. In all of these situations, there is an excuse (for not acting). If, however, he fears something that does not have a major impact upon his virtue, but damages his adornment and pride, or that they speak coarse words in his face, such things are for the increase of rank and he is not relieved of the obligation (to chastise) for such reasons. Protecting such things is not praiseworthy in the Law; however, the protection of virtue is a point of the Law. Moreover, if he fears that they will slander him, or be rude to him, or become his enemy and not submit to him in matters, there is no doubt but that he is not excused (from this duty). For, there is no safeguarding of the public morality devoid of this—unless the sin be slandering and he knows that if he chastises them, they will not cease to do so, and will multiply their sinfulness. Then, being excused from acting is lawful.

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<sup>985</sup> Headgear was often a sign of rank and office.

But, if he fears for reasons connected with his family and relatives, as in the case of the ascetic who knows that he will not be beaten and has no property for them to take, but his family and relatives may be tormented as a reprisal against him; it is not appropriate for him to act to safeguard public morality. To endure (the troubles) with respect to himself is lawful, but not with respect to others. Indeed, refraining because of them is a religious duty, and that too is important.

THE FOURTH ELEMENT is the manner of safeguarding public morality. Know that there are eight steps in safeguarding public morality: learning the situation, ascertaining the culprit, giving counsel, speaking harshly, changing (behavior) by word and deed, causing fear of injury and warning, drawing weapons, and summoning supporters and rallying the public. It is necessary to observe these steps in this:

*THE FIRST STEP* is to learn the situation. One must first know (the sin) with certainty and recognize it truly. One must not spy, nor eavesdrop at doors, or from the roof. One must not ask neighbors. If there is something concealed under clothing, one should not touch it to see what it is. If, without spying, one hears the sound of a stringed instrument or smells the odor of wine, then one executes one's guardianship. If two just men inform him, he should accept (their testimony). It is lawful to enter a house without permission on the word of two just men. However, it is preferable not to enter on the word of one just man if the house is the property of the suspect. The right of the owner is not nullified on the word of one just person. It is said that on the ring of Luqman the Wise these words were inscribed: "Concealing that which thou hast seen with thine own eyes is better than disgracing someone on a suspicion."

*THE SECOND STEP* is to ascertain the culprit. It may be that someone does something and not know that it is not right, such as the villager who performs a formal prayer in the mosque and does not bow and the prostrate himself fully, or he may have some uncleanness on his footgear and, if he knew that formal prayer is not perfect with that, he would not have prayed. Therefore, he should be instructed and taught the rules with kindness so as not to cause him embarrassment, for embarrassing a Muslim unnecessarily is not appropriate. The injury to whomever you would instruct, and have called him ignorant and foolish and reminded him of his defects, cannot be endured without salve. The salve is that you remember his excuse and say: "No one is born of his mother learned. He must learn. Whoever does not know, the fault is that of his mother, his father, or his teacher. Is there no one in your region to teach you?" By these words, and the like, he is made happy. Whoever does not do this so as to vex someone, he is like the person who washes

blood from clothing with urine. Or, though wishing to perform a good deed, has done the opposite.

*THE THIRD STEP* is to preach and give counsel with kindness, not harshness. If the person knows that it is forbidden, then preaching and counsel will have no effect; intimidation must be employed. Kindness in that, for example, is when someone slanders another, one says: "Who amongst us has no faults? Attending to one's own faults is better." Or one should recite something about slander.

There is here a great pitfall from which one does not escape safely except that he be companionable. There are two honors for the self in giving counsel: one is to display the honor of knowledge and one's own self-restraint; the other is to display the honor of dominion, grandeur, and eminence to that person. Both of these arise from the love of rank; that is human nature. Usually (the guardian) will think that he is preaching in obedience to the Law, but in truth is he is in obedience to his own appetite for rank. This is a sin that he commits that may be worse than that which the (culprit) has committed. (The guardian) must examine himself: if he prefers that person's repentance come by itself or by the counsel of someone else rather than by his counsel, and he dislikes to counsel himself; then, that he himself should be counseled is incontestable. If (his counselor) prefers that he stop, he must fear God Most High, for it is to be feared that he is calling (people) to himself with this counsel, not to God Most High.

Dawud Tayi (R) was asked: "What dost thou say about a person who, to guard public morality, goes to the king and chastises him?" He answered: "I fear that he will be whipped." They said: "He has the strength to endure that." He said: "I fear that he may be killed." They said: "He has the strength to endure that." He said: "I fear a cause which is greater and more hidden, and that is vanity." Abu Sulayman Darani (R) said: "I wanted to censure such-and-such a caliph. I knew that I would be killed, but I did not fear that. However, there were many people present. I feared that they would see me in truth and firmness and that their admiration would be pleasing in my heart. Then, I would be slain when I was not sincere."

*THE FOURTH STEP* is to speak harshly. There are two rules about this:

One is that one should not speak harshly so long as one is able to speak with kindness.

The other is that when speaking one should not use foul language and should utter nothing save the truth. One should not say anything more than "oppressor," "corrupter," "fool," or "ignoramus." Everyone who sins is a fool, for the Messenger (S) said: "The person is clever who takes stock of himself and looks to the Hereafter. The fool is

that person who goes in pursuit of his lusts, and deceives himself, and hopes that he will be left alone (at the Resurrection)." Harsh language becomes appropriate when one knows that it will have a good result. If he knows that it will not, he should frown, and look upon (the culprit) with contempt, and turn away from him.

*THE FIFTH STEP* is to change (behavior) by deed. In this, there are two rules:

One is that, as much as one can, one urge a person to change. One tells him, for example, to tear the seams of silk garments, to vacate usurped land, to pour out wine, to get off a silken carpet, and to leave the mosque if he is ritually unclean.

The second rule is that if one is not capable (to do so by words), one drive that person out. The rule of this is one should limit oneself to the least. If one can take the person by the hand and expel him, one should not grab him by the beard or foot and drag him out. When breaking a harp, it should not be into tiny pieces. Seams should be torn open slowly and the cloth not torn. One should not smash the vessel containing wine if one can pour it out. If one cannot, and the person has it in his hands, it is lawful to throw a stone at it and break it, for the right to that property is invalid. If it is a drinking glass with a narrow top so that when one is busy pouring it out, they will be able to seize him and beat him, it is lawful to smash it and flee. At the beginning of the prohibition of wine, breaking the vessels of wine was commanded, but that has been abrogated. It was also said that there were vessels which were not suitable for anything other than wine. However, now it is not proper to smash them without reason, and there is a fine for that.

*THE SIXTH STEP* is to threaten, as when one says: "Pour out the wine! If thou doest it not, I shall crack thy skull and I shall do this and that to thee!" This is permissible when it is necessary and kindness does not prompt him to pour it out. There are two rules for this:

One is that one not threaten something which is not lawful, to say, for example: "I shall make thy wife or child sorry." The other is that one may say what one can, so long as it is not a lie. One should not say: "I shall strike off thy head and set it on the gallows," and other lies of this sort. However, if one exaggerates a lot with the intention that (the person) will become anxious, it is permissible as a stratagem. Just as when one wants to make peace between two people, if there is an exaggeration or a diminution—in speech—it is lawful.

*THE SEVENTH STEP* is to beat with hand, foot, or staff. This is permissible in a time of need. A time of need is when (the culprit) will not stop sinning without being injured. However, when he has stopped, beating is not proper, for punishment after sinning is reprimand and

Islamic punishment. No one other than rulers is competent to do that. The rule of conduct for this is that beating by hand is sufficient, not with a staff, and that he should not be struck on the head. If this is not enough, it is permissible to draw a sword. If a person touches a woman and does not remove his hand except out of fear of the sword, it is lawful to draw one's sword. If there is stream between him and the guardian, he should put an arrow to his bow and say: "Stop that, or I shall shoot!" If he does not stop, it is lawful to shoot, but he should aim at the thigh or lower leg and avoid any vital spot.

*THE EIGHTH STEP* is, should the guardian not be enough by himself, that he rally the people to assemble and fight. It may happen that the sinner will gather a group too, leading to a brawl. Some have said: "When it is like that, it is not correct without the order of the imam; for turmoil arises, leading to corruption." Another group has said that as it is lawful for a people to go to battle against the unbelievers without the order of the imam, it is lawful to go battle against sinners and that if the guardian is slain, he is a martyr.

#### THE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR THE GUARDIAN OF PUBLIC MORALITY

Know that the guardian of public morality must absolutely have three qualities: knowledge, piety, and a good nature. If he does not have knowledge, he will not discriminate between the bad acts and the good. If he does not have piety, even though he can discriminate (between bad and good), he will work with a bias. If he does not have a good nature, when they vex him, he will grow angry and forget God Most High and not stop upon the limits (of punishment). That which he does, he will do for his own ego, not for God, and his safeguarding of the public morality will become sinful.

It was for this that when 'Ali (R) threw down an unbeliever to slay him, and (the unbeliever) spat into Ali's face. 'Ali stayed his hand and did not slay him, saying: "I became angry. I was afraid that I would not slay him for God Most High." 'Umar (R) struck someone with a scourge and was about to strike again when that person called him a bad name. ('Umar) did not strike him again until his anger had departed. He was asked: "Why didst thou stop?" He replied: "Up to that point I was right in beating him; (but) now that he had called me names, if I beat him, it would have been with anger." And it was for this that the Messenger (S) said: "Let no one chastise for lapses) except him who knows the Law about what he is doing, is wise in what he orders and what he forbids, and is the companion in what he orders and what he

forbids.”<sup>986</sup> Hasan Basri (R) says: “Command whatever thou wishest, but before, thou must be obedient to thine own commands and act upon them.”

This is according to the rules of conduct, but the prerequisite is that which was asked of the Messenger (S): “Should we enjoin the good and prohibit the bad, or first implement them ourselves?” He replied: “Nay, if ye have not implemented all of them yourselves, do not hold back from safeguarding public morality.”

Among the rules of safeguarding public morality is that one should be patient and offer one’s body to trouble, for God Most High says: *Enjoin the good and forbid the bad and endure that which may befall thee.* (Q. 31:17) Anyone who cannot endure trouble cannot (perform the duties of) the guardianship of public morality.

And amongst the important rules, one is that one have few attachments and little greed, for wherever greed comes, guardianship is nullified. One of the shaykhs was in the habit of taking glands from a butcher for his cat. One day, he saw an offense against morality on the part of the butcher. He returned to his home and drove out the cat; then he went to the butcher to chastise him. The butcher said: “Thou always wantest glands from me; thou cannot chastise me.” He answered: “I first drove out the ‘cat, then I came to chastise!”

Whoever wants people to like him and praise him and be happy with him, cannot perform the duties of the guardianship of public morality. Ka'b al-Ahbar said to Abu Muslim Khawlani:<sup>987</sup> “How is thy position amongst the people?” He replied: “Good.” (Ka'b) said: “In the Torah, it is said: ‘The position of whoever chastises on behalf of public morality is disagreeable.’ (Abu Muslim) said: “The Torah speaks the truth and Abu Muslim lies.”

Know that the foundation of safeguarding public morality is that the guardian be unhappy for that rebel (against God) who proceeds in disobedience. He looks at him with the eye of compassion. He forbids all as a person forbids his own child, and observes compassion. Someone chastised Ma'mun<sup>988</sup> and spoke harshly to him. Ma'mun said: “O young man, God Most High has sent better than thee to worse than me and said: ‘Speak gently.’ He sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and said: ‘And speak unto him a gentle word’ (Q. 20:44) Speak gently so that it may

<sup>986</sup> That is, he himself applies to himself what he orders and forbids.

<sup>987</sup> Abu Muslim Khawlani: Abū Muslim ‘Abdullāh bin Thuwāb al-Khawlānī, the brother of Abū Idris Khawlānī (see Note 822), with whom he is often confused. One of the eight Followers famous for piety, he became a Muslim either in Yemen during the lifetime of the Prophet or in Syria during the reign of Mu'awiyah (see Note 717). A forerunner of the ascetic movement, he died AH366/976CE.

<sup>988</sup> Ma'mun: The Abbasid caliph Ma'mūn who reigned at Baghdad AH198-218/813-33CE.

happen he accept it." Indeed, one must follow the example of the Messenger who, when a youth came to him, said: "O Messenger of God, wilt thou give me permission to commit adultery?" The Companions cried out against him and made for him, but the Messenger (S) said: "Leave him alone." He called the youth to him until they sat knee to knee.<sup>989</sup> (The Messenger) said: "Young man, dost thou consider it lawful for someone to do that with thy mother?" He replied: "No." (The Prophet) said: "Neither do people." Then he asked: "Dost thou consider it lawful for someone to do that with thy paternal or maternal aunts?" He said: "No." He asked (about female relatives) one by one, and the youth would reply: "No." Then the Messenger (S) placed his hand upon the young man's heart and said: "O Lord God, cleanse his heart and protect his chastity and forgive his sins." The young man returned from that place and nothing was more repugnant to him than adultery.

Fudayl 'Iyad was told: "Sufyan bin 'Uyaynah"<sup>990</sup> accepts robes of honor from the king." He said: "He has a greater right than that in the public treasury." Then, when he saw (Sufyan) in private, he scolded him and upbraided him. Sufyan said: "O Aba 'Ali, even if I am not counted among the righteous, I love the righteous."

Wuslah bin Ashyam<sup>991</sup> was sitting with his students. A man passed by and his loin wrapper was sweeping the ground, as was the custom with the haughty Arabs. This had been prohibited. (Wuslah's) companions wanted to deal harshly with him. (Wuslah) said: "Be quiet; I will take care of it." He called out to the man: "O brother, I have some business with thee." He answered: "What?" (Wuslah): "Thou shouldst raise the hem of thy wrapper." He answered: "Very good and thanks." Then, (Wuslah) said to his students: "If I had spoken harshly to him, he would have said: 'I shall not do it,' and he might also have insulted me."

A man put his hand on a woman and drew a knife. No one had the boldness to approach him as the woman screamed. Bishr Hafi (R) passed by him and struck his shoulder against the man's shoulder with such force that the man fell down and became unconscious and then began to sweat. The woman escaped from him. The people asked (the man): "What happened to thee?" He said: "I do not know! A man passed by me and his body struck mine. And he whispered: 'God sees where thou art and what thou doest.' I fell down from the awe of those words." They said: "That was Bishr Hafi." The man said: "Ah! I cannot look

<sup>989</sup> They were, of course, sitting on the floor, usually on mats or rugs.

<sup>990</sup> Sufyan bin 'Uyaynah: Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah, Abū Muḥammad, a well-known ascetic and scholar of the Quran and the Religious Law born c. AH96/715CE. He lived at Kufah and died in hiding at Basrah AH161-2/778CE.

<sup>991</sup> Wuṣlah bin Ashyam: No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

upon him out of shame." He immediately became feverish and did not live more than a week.

### PART THREE: CONCERNING OBJECTIONABLE THINGS THAT ARE COMMON IN CUSTOM

Know that in this era, the world is filled with bad things, and the people have lost hope that it will be rectified. Because they are not able to (correct) everything, they also keep distant from what they are able to do. Those persons who are religious are the same. As for the heedless, they themselves are quite satisfied with that. However, it is not lawful that thou be silent about what thou art able to do. We shall indicate each chastisement for these, for it is not possible to discuss all of them. Some of these transgressions occur in the mosque, some in the market, some in the public bath, and some at home.

#### OBJECTIONABLE ACTS IN MOSQUES

Those are that a person performs formal prayer and does not bow and prostrate himself completely; or he recites the Quran with a tune;<sup>992</sup> or the callers who summon the people to the obligatory formal prayer call with many modulations. This is prohibited. At the time (of chanting) *Come to success*,<sup>993</sup> he turns his whole body away from the direction of prayer. Another is that the preacher wear garments of black silk and hold a sword decorated with gold, (both of) which are forbidden.<sup>994</sup> Another is that is not proper to hold a meeting, tell stories, and recite poetry in the mosque, or to sell amulets or other things. Also, the entry of madmen and drunkards into the mosque—when they raise their voices and annoy the people in the mosque. However, it is lawful for children who are quiet or the mad person who gives no trouble and does not soil the mosque to enter it. But, if the children occasionally start to play in the mosque, they should not be stopped, because the blacks were playing with swords and shields in the mosque of Madinah when 'Ayishah (R) watched them. But, if the play is prolonged, it should be stopped. If a person sews or writes something, not disturbing the people, it is lawful. Moreover, if one always lays out a display (of goods for sale) that bothers no one, it is lawful, but if it always becomes a place of trade, it is disliked.<sup>995</sup>

<sup>992</sup> "tune" (*lahn*): or with mispronunciations. The Arabic word admits of both meanings, but it here it probably refers to an exaggerated style of chanting which distorts the words and can make them virtually unintelligible.

<sup>993</sup> A phrase of the call to prayer where the caller turns his head to the left.

<sup>994</sup> The preacher's holding the sword is not forbidden; the gold on it is.

<sup>995</sup> "disliked": *makrūh*.

As for a work that causes a crowd to appear in the mosque, such as continually giving orders or writing deeds, it is not appropriate except occasionally when judicial case occurs. The Messenger (S) sometimes issued judgments (in the mosque). As for the washermen who dry clothing in the mosque, or dyers who dye and dry cloth in the mosque, this is objectionable. People who lecture to assemblies in the mosque and relate stories from untrustworthy books of Traditions, in which there are additions and omissions, should also be driven out, as the forefathers were wont to do. As for those, dominated by their carnal appetites, who dress up and recite things in rhymed prose and sing songs while young women are present in the assembly, these are major sins and are not proper outside the mosque either. Rather, the preacher should be a person who is externally righteous and possess the garb and form of the religious and (their) gravity.

In whatever form it occurs, it is not proper for young women and men to sit in the mosque without an obstruction between them, as Ayishah (R), in her own time, interdicted women from the mosque. In the time of the Messenger (S), it was not forbidden. She said: "If the Messenger could see what the state of affairs is today, he would have forbidden it. Among the objectionable actions: holding a council in the mosque, dividing (something), arranging village affairs, turning it into an arena, engaging in slanderous and vain conversation. All of these are objectionable and are contrary to the sanctity of the mosque.

#### OBJECTIONABLE ACTS IN PUBLIC MARKETS

These are that (merchants) lie about the goods for sale and conceal their defects, give false measure with scales, weights, and measuring sticks, adulterate the goods, sell lutes and staffs to which small bells are attached, sell figures of animals for children at the Festivals, sell wooden swords and shields at New Year's,<sup>996</sup> clay horns for the Festival of the Dragon,<sup>997</sup> sell caps and tunics made of silk for men, or sell mended and washed clothes, offering them as new, and anything in which there is that kind of fraud; or who sell censers, jugs, utensils, and vessels of silver and gold, and the like.

Among these things, some are forbidden and some disliked. As for the figures of animals, they are forbidden. As for that which is sold at New Year's and the Festival of the Dragon such as the wooden swords

<sup>996</sup> New Year's Day (*naw ruz*): See Note 744 above.

<sup>997</sup> "Festival of the Dragon" (*Sadah*): a festival in which the Persians lit bon fires to commemorate the victory of Hushang over a dangerous dragon. He accomplished this by throwing one huge stone upon another, thereby cause sparks which that the brush about the dragon, burning it to death. (Steingass.) It was celebrated fifty days before the New Year on the 10th of Bahman (about the 29th of January).

and shields and the clay horns, they are not in themselves forbidden, but the display of the Zoroastrian customs is forbidden and this is contrary to the Law; whatever is used for that is not proper. Indeed, excess in decorating the markets for New Year's Day, making a large quantity of New Year's Day cakes, and the increase in new formalities for New Year's Day are not good. Rather, the New Year's Festival and the Festival of the Dragon should be expunged, nor should anyone mention them. A party of the forefathers has said: "One should fast on the New Year's Festival because eating those foods is not proper. One should not light a lamp on the eve of the Dragon Festival so that no fire may be seen." Researchers have said: "Fasting on that day is also the remembrance of that day. It is not proper that the name of the day be mentioned in any manner. Rather, it should be treated the same as any other day. The same for the eve of the Dragon Festival, so that neither name and nor trace of it remain."

#### OBJECTIONABLE ACTS ON PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES

These are that a post should not be placed on the road, or goods laid out for sale so as to narrow the right of way, or trees planted, or a canopy extended into it so that it strikes a person riding an animal, or an animal tethered in it while being loaded so as to restrict passage—this is not proper except when absolutely necessary, as when unloading and delivering to a house. It is not right that animals be driven in narrow streets loaded with sharp objects that may tear clothing, except when there is no alternative to that route. Then, it is lawful out of necessity.

It is not right to load animal with a burden heavier than it has the strength to bear. It is not proper for a butcher to slaughter a sheep in the road so that so as to create the danger (of splashing blood) on people's clothing. He should construct a place for that in his shop. The same is true for throwing melon rinds into a public thoroughfare, or pouring out water that makes the road slippery.<sup>998</sup> Likewise, whoever throws snow into the road, or his (rain) water falls into the road from the eaves of his house so as to block the road is obliged to clean it up. However, that which is universal is a duty for all, and the governor should make the people carry it away. It is not right for anyone to keep a dog at his gate that causes people anxiety. If there is no trouble from it other than it keeps the road dirty and pollutes it, it cannot be prohibited, for avoidance is possible. But if it sleeps on the road restricting traffic, it is not proper. For, if his master were to sit or sleep on the road, it would not be proper.

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<sup>998</sup> It should be remembered that streets were rarely paved in Ghazzali's time and they would become slippery with mud when water fell on them.

### OBJECTIONABLE ACTS IN THE PUBLIC BATHS

These are that (a man) does not cover himself from his navel to his knees, or that he exposes his bare thigh to the masseur for massage or scraping. Indeed, it is not proper for (the masseur) to insert his hand under the loin wrapper, for touching has the same import as seeing. The pictures of living creatures<sup>999</sup> on the walls of the bath are objectionable. They should be destroyed or taken out. Also, putting a hand, bucket, or cup in a small amount of water is objectionable in the school of Shafi'i (R), but is not according to the Malikite school. Using a lot of water and wasting it are among the objectionable acts. There are other objectionable acts which we have discussed in the chapter concerning Obligatory Purity.<sup>1000</sup>

### OBJECTIONABLE THINGS IN ENTERTAINING GUESTS

Silk carpets, gold and silver censers and sprinkling bottles (for rose water), perfume bottles and curtains upon which there are pictures—however, pictures are lawful on carpets and pillows; and censers in the form of animals are objectionable. As for the music of stringed instruments and the looking of young women at the young men that is the seed of corruption, it is a duty to safeguard public morality and act against all of these. If one is not able to do that, one should leave. Ahmad Hanbal rose and left (a place) because of a silver collyrium box he had seen. In the same way, it is not proper to stay in a party where there is a man wearing silk clothing or a gold ring. If a child of rational age has on silken clothing, it is also not proper to sit there, for silk is forbidden for the males of the people (of Muhammad), just as drinking wine is. Too, (the boy) may become habituated to that and the appetite for that may remain with him after puberty. However, if the child is below the age of rationality, and does not appreciate the pleasure of it, it is disliked, but (his wearing silk) does not, indeed, reach the level of prohibition. It is not proper to remain at a party in which there is a buffoon causing laughter by lies and improprieties.

A detailed (list) of objectionable acts would be lengthy. Now that you have become acquainted with these, make an analogy of them with the objectionable acts at schools, the lodges of dervishes, the courts of judgment, the court of the king, and the like.

<sup>999</sup> "living creatures" (*hayawān*): creatures endowed with the animating spirit. This usually refers to animals, but can include humans. This seems to be the sense in which Ghazzali is using the word here.

<sup>1000</sup> The First Pillar, Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER TEN: CONCERNING GOVERNANCE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE

Know that having sovereign power is a great matter: the vice-regency of God Most High on the earth—if it be conducted in a just way. When it is devoid of compassion and justice, it is the vice-regency of Iblis. There is no greater cause of corruption than the oppression of a ruler. The basis of having sovereign power is knowledge and action.

The knowledge of exercising sovereign power is lengthy, but at the head of all those sciences is this: the ruler must know for what purpose he has been brought to this world and what his permanent abode will be. The world is his way station, not his permanent abode. He is in the form of a traveler whose mother's womb was his first station and the grave will be his final station. His homeland lies beyond that. Every year, every month, every day that passes of his life is like a leg of that journey by which he moves ever closer to his permanent abode. Everyone must pass over the Bridge.<sup>1001</sup>

If he spends his life on the construction of the bridge and forgets the destination, he is unwise. Rather, wise is he who does not engage in anything in the station of the world except the search for the provisions for the journey (to the Hereafter). He is content with worldly goods according to the amount of his need and necessity. Anything in excess of that is all a fatal poison. At the time of death, all of his sovereign power will be dust and there will be nothing of his gold and silver. Therefore, whoever accumulates much, his portion of that is the amount of his own need. All of the rest is the seed of envy and regret. Tearing his soul away will become hard for him at the time of death. The torment of the Hereafter is itself based upon these regrets.

It is not possible to endure the appetite for the world patiently, except with painful effort. But, if one's faith is sound in that one will lose the pleasure of the Hereafter—and that is an eternal kingdom which no affliction can touch—because of the miserable and turbid pleasures of this life, enduring these few days becomes easy—if one's faith is sound. It is the same for person who has a beloved and is told: "If thou goest to thy beloved this night, thou wilt never see thy beloved again. But, if thou art patient tonight, we shall deliver thy beloved to thee for a thousand nights without a companion and without a guardian." Even if his love is excessive, enduring the one night will be easy for him out of the expectation of a thousand nights.

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<sup>1001</sup> "the Bridge": the bridge over the fires of hell leading to Paradise. For the righteous, it will be a broad highway; for the unrighteous, it will be narrower than the edge of a sword.

The duration of the world is not a thousandth of the duration of the Hereafter. Indeed, it is not related to that, for (the Hereafter) is endless and the length of eternity cannot be encompassed by the imagination of any person. If one imagines that the seven heavens and the earth are filled with millet and every thousand years a bird removes one grain of that millet, that millet will (eventually) become exhausted; but nothing will have been diminished of eternity! Consequently, the life of a human being, if, for example, one lives a hundred years and is entrusted with an earthly empire extending from the east to the west, uncontested, how much is there in that when put beside a Hereafter without end? Since everyone has some small part of the world itself entrusted to him, and that (little bit), too, is miserable and turbid; and in all that there is, there are many vile persons who are, in that sense, ahead of him and behind him, what compulsion prompts a person to sell the everlasting kingdom for this humble and miserable life on earth?

The significance of this is that the ruler or the non-ruler must evaluate himself and refresh his soul so that restraining himself from the carnal appetites of the world, being compassionate with subjects, treating the servants of God Most High (the people) well, and exercising the vice-regency of God will be easy for him. If he comprehends this, he must busy himself with governance in that manner which has been commanded, not in the manner that is for his worldly interest. For, there is no act of worship or intimacy greater to God Most High than just governance. The Messenger (S) says: "One day of justice by a just ruler is better than the continual worship of sixty years." Among the seven persons, according to the Traditions, who "shall be in the shadow of God Most High," the first is the just ruler. And he said: "The work of sixty truly righteous persons striving in worship is raised to heaven every day for the just ruler." And he said: "The most beloved and closest to God Most High is the just leader, and the most inimical and the most distant is the tyrannical leader." And he said: "By that God in Whose powerful grasp is the soul of Muhammad, every day as many deeds are taken up for the just ruler as are acts for all of his subjects, and each of his prayers are counted as 70,000 prayers."

Therefore, since it is thus, what booty is there greater than that God Most High grant a person the dignity of sovereignty so that one of his hours will be counted equal to the life span of another? When a person does not recognize this blessing and engages in oppression and (the sating) of his own desires, it is obvious that he deserves enmity.

#### **THIS JUSTICE IS ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE OBSERVANCE OF TEN RULES:**

**THE FIRST RULE** is that (the ruler) evaluate every occurrence as though he were the subject and another the ruler. Whatever he does not

approve of for himself, he should not approve of for other Muslims. If he does, he has dissembled and betrayed his own stewardship. On the day (of the battle) of Badr, the Messenger (S) was sitting in the shade when Gabriel (A) came to him and said: "Thou art in the shade and thy Companions are in the sun!" (The Messenger) was reproached for this much of a difference!

The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever desires to escape hell and go to heaven must, when death overtakes him, be overtaken upon the words '*there is no god but God*', with that intent that whatever he disapproves of for himself, he disapproves of for every Muslim." And he said: "Whoever rises in the morning and has some ambition other than (the satisfaction of) God Most High is not a man of God. If he does nothing for the affairs of Muslims and does not care for them, he is not one of them."

THE SECOND RULE is that he not discount the waiting of those having needs in his court and that he be wary of that danger. So long as any Muslim has a need, he should not engage in any supererogatory acts of worship, for the taking care of the needs of Muslims is more important than any supererogatory acts of worship. One day 'Umar (bin) 'Abd al-'Aziz (R) was attending to the affairs of the people up to the time of the noon obligatory formal prayer and he had not finished. He went to his residence for an hour's rest. Someone said to him: "What surely dost thou have that death will not come upon thee during this hour while there may be a person in need waiting in thy court and whose rights thou wouldst have failed to take care of?" ('Umar) rose immediately and went back (to his court).

THE THIRD RULE is that one not let oneself become habituated to indulging one's appetites so that one wears fine clothing and eats delicious foods; rather, one must be satisfied (with little) in all things, for it is not possible to be dissatisfied and just.

'Umar Khattab (R) asked Salman: "What hast thou heard about my affairs which thou findest repugnant?" He answered: "I have heard that once thou didst place two kinds of stew on thy dining cloth and that thou hast two tunics, one for the day and the other for the night." ('Umar) said: "Nothing other than this?" "No." ('Umar): "These two shall not be any more."

THE FOURTH RULE is that the foundation of affairs, as much as possible, be kindness, not harshness. The Messenger (S) said: "Every ruler who shows compassion to his subjects will be treated with compassion on the Day or Resurrection." He offered a supplication, saying: "O Lord God! Be compassionate with every ruler who shows compassion to his subjects. Be harsh with him who is harsh (with his

subjects)." And, said the Messenger (S): "Sovereignty and command is a good thing for the person who acts on their behalf. Power is a bad thing for the person who violates (the trust)."

Hisham bin 'Abd al-Malik was one of the caliphs. He asked Abu Hazim,<sup>1002</sup> one of the great religious scholars: "What is the stratagem for salvation in this work?" (The scholar) answered: "That every dirham thou receivest should be received from a source which is lawful and that thou puttest it where it is properly due." He said: "Who is able to do that?" (The scholar) said: "Whoever does not have the strength to endure hell and who loves Paradise."

THE FIFTH RULE is that one strive earnestly that every subject be pleased with one in agreement with the Religious Law together. The Messenger (S) said: "The best of leaders are those who like you and whom ye like; the worst of them are those who are inimical to you and to whom you are inimical. They curse you and ye curse them." The ruler must not become haughty because of what he hears and the praise he is given. He may suppose that all are pleased with him, while all of that (praise) is from fear. Rather, he must dispatch confidants to investigate and ask the people about his status (with them), so that he may learn his own defects from their voices.

THE SIXTH RULE is that he not seek the pleasure of any person contrary to the Law. The displeasure of whoever is displeased because (of that person's) opposition to the Law causes no loss to (the ruler). 'Umar (R) said: "Every day that I rise, one half of mankind is displeased with me." Necessarily, anyone who receives a decision against him will be unhappy, so both opposing litigants cannot be pleased. And he said: "The person who passes up the satisfaction of God Most High for the satisfaction of people is indeed a great ignoramus."

Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to 'Ayishah (R): "Give me some brief advice." 'Ayishah (R) wrote to him: "I heard from the Messenger (S) that God Most High will be pleased with whoever seeks the pleasure of God Most High through the displeasure of the people and He will also change that to the people's being pleased with him. And God Most High will be displeased with whoever seeks the pleasure of the people with the displeasure of God Most High, and He will also make the people displeased with him."

THE SEVENTH RULE is that one know that the danger of power is hard to bear and the assumption of the government of God Most High's people a tremendous affair. Whoever has had the good fortune to engage

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<sup>1002</sup> Abu Hazim: See Note 815 above.

in that has received a great happiness, beyond which there is no (greater) happiness. If he is deficient, he falls into misfortune, beyond which there is no misfortune like it.

Ibn 'Abbas (R) says: "One day I saw the Messenger (S) coming. He seized the ring of the door of the Ka'bah. There were some of the Quraysh inside it. Then he said: 'Leaders and rulers are from the Quraysh as long as they perform three things: one is that they be merciful when they are asked for mercy, that they be just when they are asked for judgment, and that they do what they say. Let whoever does not do this be cursed by God, the angels, and all mankind! God Most High will not accept a religious duty from him, nor a Practice of the Prophet.' So, look! How great a matter this is that, because of it, no act of worship will be acceptable, neither obligatory, nor of the Traditional practice!"

The Messenger (S) said: "Whoever judges between two persons and is unjust; let the unjust one be cursed by God!" And he (S) said: "There are three people at whom God Most High will not look on the Day of Resurrection: the lying ruler, the old adulterer, and the overweening beggar—that is, the impudent and bragging dervish." And he (S) said to the Companions: "It will be very soon that eastern and western lands will be conquered and become yours. All of the officials of those parts will be in fire except him who abstains because of God Most High, takes the path of piety, and fulfills the trust."

And he said: "There is no servant (of God) to whom God Most High entrusts a subject whom he deceives and to whom he does not show compassion and give counsel that God Most High does not forbid heaven to him." And he (S) said: "Say to anyone who has been granted sovereignty over Muslims and does not regard them as his own family: 'Take thy place in hell!'" And he (S) said: "Two persons of my nation will be deprived of my intercession: the oppressive ruler and the innovator (in religion) who overshoots the mark in religion until it exceeds the limit." And he (S) said: "The hardest torment on the Day of Resurrection will be that of the unjust rulers."

And he (S) said: "There are five persons with whom God Most High is angry. If He wishes, He subjects them to His anger in this world; if not, their residence will be in the Fire. One is the prince of a people who takes his right from them and does not give them justice and who does not withhold his tyranny from them. Another is the chief of a people who obey him while he does not observe equality between the strong and the weak and speaks with bias. Another is the man who does not command his wife and children to obey God, does not teach them their religious obligations, and does not care where their food comes from. Another is the man who does not pay the wages of a worker he has hired when the work is completed. And another is the man who oppresses his wife because of the dowry (he is obligated to pay her)."

'Umar (R) wanted to perform formal prayer for a dead person. A man went forward and performed the prayer. Then, after the corpse had been buried, he put his hand on the grave and said: "O Lord God! If Thou tormentest him, let it be because he was a rebel against Thee. If Thou shovest him mercy, he is in need of mercy. Rejoice, O man, for thou wert never a prince, nor a deputy, nor a clerk, nor an executive officer, nor a tax collector." Then the man vanished. 'Umar (R) ordered that he be sought, but he was not found. 'Umar (R) said: "That was Khidr."<sup>1003</sup>

The Messenger (S) said: "Woe unto the princes! Woe unto the deputies! Woe unto the betrayer of trust! They are a people who will wish at the Resurrection that they had been suspended from the heavens by their own hair and had never done any official work." And the Messenger (S) said: "No man is given dominion over ten persons that he is not brought forth manacled on the Day of Resurrection. If he was a doer of good, he will be set free; if not, more fetters will be added."

'Umar Khattab (R) said: "Woe unto the earthly judge from the Heavenly Judge when He sees him, unless he has given justice and done right, not issued judgments capriciously, not favored his relatives, and has not altered judgments out of either fear or expectation; but has made a mirror of the Book of God Most High and placed it in front of himself and judged with that."

And the Messenger (S) said: "On the Day of Resurrection the rulers will be brought out and it will be said: 'Ye were the shepherds of Our flocks and the treasurers of Our earthly kingdom. Why did ye beat in punishment and punish more than that which I have commanded?' They will say: 'O Lord God! Out of anger for their trespasses against Thee.' He will say: 'Why should your anger be greater than Mine?' Then He will say to another: 'Why didst thou beat in punishment less than that which I have commanded?' He will say: 'O Lord God! I had mercy on him.' He will say: 'Why shouldst thou be more merciful than I?' They will seize him who exceeded and him who reduced and they will fill the corners of hell."

Hudhayfah says: "I, in all events, do not praise any ruler whether he be good or bad." He was asked: "Why?" He answered: "Because I heard the Messenger (S) say: 'On the Day of Resurrection, all the rulers will be brought forward, unjust and just, and all will be placed upon the Bridge (over the fires of hell). God Most High will inspire the bridge to scatter them with a single scattering so that that everyone who had oppressed in judgment, or accepted a bribe in a case, or listened too much to one side (in a dispute)—all will fall and go to hell for seventy years, until that time when they reach their own station."

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<sup>1003</sup> Khidr: See Note 902 above.

In the Traditions, it is related: "David (A) used to go out at night in disguise so that they did not know that he was David. He would ask everyone he met about David's character. One day Gabriel came before him in the form of a man and said to him: 'David would be a good man if it were not that he ate food from the public treasury, not that which he had earned by his own labor.' Then David went to a niche and wept, saying: 'O Lord God! Teach me a skill that I may eat by my own labor.' Then God Most High taught him how to make chain mail."<sup>1004</sup>

'Umar Khattab (R) used to make the rounds each night in the place of the night patrol so that whenever he found some deficiency he could take care of it. He said: "If there is a mangy sheep being driven by the channel of the Euphrates, and oil is not rubbed on it, I fear that I shall be questioned about it at the Resurrection." As his caution was like this and his justice was like that, no one could overtake him.

'Abdullah bin 'Amr 'As (R) says: "I had supplicated God Most High that He would show me 'Umar in a dream. After twelve years, I saw him in a dream like a person who had performed the greater ablation and was holding a loincloth in front of him. I said: 'O Commander of the Believers, how hast thou found God Most High?' He replied: 'O 'Abdullah, how long has it been since I departed from thee?' I said: 'Twelve years.' He said: 'Until now, I have been engaged in the reckoning of my account. It was feared that my affair would be ruined, if God had not had mercy upon me.'"

The condition of 'Umar was thus, even though he had nothing more of the trappings of office than a scourge. Buzurgmehr<sup>1005</sup> sent a messenger to see what kind of a man 'Umar was and what his character was like. When he reached Madinah, he asked: "Where is your king?" They answered: "We do not have a king. We have a commander who has gone out of the gate." He also went out and saw 'Umar sleeping on the ground in the sun. He had placed some armor under his head as a pillow and his brow was running with sweat, wetting the earth. When (the messenger) saw that state, he was deeply affected. This was the man for whom all the kings of the world trembled in awe! Then he said: "Thou hast established justice; thou mayest certainly sleep in security. Our king has oppressed; he most certainly is always fearful. I testify that the true religion is your religion. If I had not come here as a messenger, I would immediately become a Muslim. Now I shall return after this."

<sup>1004</sup> In Islamic tradition, David is credited with the invention of chain mail (*zirih*).

<sup>1005</sup> Buzurgmehr, famous in Iranian history and folklore for his wisdom, integrity, and piety. He served as chief minister and counselor for the Sassanian monarch Anushirwan the Just (rgd. 531-579CE). At that time, Zoroastrianism was the state religion of Iran. Islam entered Iran with a series of Persian defeats at the hands of the Arabs in the second quarter of the 1st Islamic (2nd quarter of 7th CE) century.

So, this is the danger of sovereign power. The study of this is lengthy. The ruler will find safety in always keeping pious religious scholars near in order to teach him the way of justice and remind him of the danger of this task.

THE EIGHTH RULE is that one always be thirsty to see the pious religious scholars and to be eager to hear their counsel, and to be wary of seeing the religious scholars who are eager for the world, as they will tempt one and praise one and seek one's pleasure until they put the corpses and forbidden things of the world into one's hands by trickery and deceit.

The pious scholar is he who does not covet (the ruler) and gives him his just due, as when Shaqiq of Balkh<sup>1006</sup> went to Harun al-Rashid.<sup>1007</sup> Harun said: "Art thou Shaqiq the ascetic?" He said: "I am Shaqiq, but I am not an ascetic." (Harun) said: "Give me some advice." He answered: "God Most High has put thee in the place of the Most Truthful One"<sup>1008</sup> and asks of thee truth as he did of him. He has put thee in the place of the Distinguisher (of Truth from Falsehood)<sup>1009</sup> and asks of thee to distinguish between the true and the false as He did of him. He has put thee in the place of the Possessor of the Two Lights<sup>1010</sup> and asks of thee modesty as He did of him. And He has put thee in the place of 'Ali the son of Abu Talib and asks of thee wisdom and justice as He did of him." (Harun) said: "Add to that counsel." He said: "Yes, God Most High has a palace which is called hell, and he has made thee its gatekeeper. He has given thee three things: the wealth of the public treasury, the sword, and the whip; and He has said: 'Keep the people out of hell with these three things. With this whip, whip whoever acts contrary to the command of God and discipline him. With this sword, execute whoever kills a person unjustly, with the permission of his avenger.'<sup>1011</sup> If thou dost not do this, thou wilt be the first to enter hell and

<sup>1006</sup> Shaqiq of Balkh: A Khorasani ascetic who died fighting in defense of Islam AH194/810CE. He was a disciple of Ibrahim Adham. Hatim al-Asamm (see Note 681) was one of Shaqiq's disciples. Some say that Shaqiq was the first to define trust in God (*tawakkul*) as a mystical state (*hāl*). (Arberry, Bagley)

<sup>1007</sup> Harun al-Rashid: The fifth caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, rgd. AH170-194/786-809CE. He ascended the throne when he was nearly 25 and presided over virtually all of the Islamic world except Spain. His reign is famous for its brilliance and he is best known in the West as a prominent figure in the *Arabian Nights*.

<sup>1008</sup> "the Most Truthful One" (*Siddiq*): an epithet Abu Bakr, the first caliph (rgd. AH11-13/632-634CE).

<sup>1009</sup> "the Distinguisher (of Truth from Falsehood)" (*Fārūq*): an epithet of 'Umar bin Khattab, the second caliph (rgd. AH13-23/634-644CE).

<sup>1010</sup> "the Possessor of the Two Lights" (*Dhu Nūrayn*): an epithet of 'Uthman, the third caliph (rgd. AH23-35/644-656CE).

<sup>1011</sup> Avenger: the representative of the slain person who has the choice of accepting the blood money or demanding the killer's life.

the others will follow thee." (Harun) said: "Say more and advise me." He said: "Thou art the spring; the others are the channel—those who are thine officials. If the spring is clear, turbidity in the channels does no harm; but if (the spring) is dark, there is no hope that the channels will be clear."

Harun al-Rashid went with 'Abbas, who was one of his confidants, to Fudayl 'Iyad. When they arrived at the gate of his house, (Fudayl) was reading the Quran and had come to this verse: *Or do those who commit evil deeds suppose that We shall make them as those who believe and do good works, the same in life and death? Bad is their judgment!* (Q. 45:21) (Harun) said: "If I seek advice, this verse is sufficient." (The meaning of this verse is that those who do evil deeds suppose that We hold them equal to those who have faith and do good deeds.)<sup>1012</sup> Then he said: "Knock on the door." 'Abbas knocked on the door and said: "Open the door to the Commander of the Believers." (Fudayl) answered: "What does the Commander of the Believers want with me?" ('Abbas) said: "Obey the Commander of the Believers. Open the door!" (Fudayl) opened the door. It was night and the lamps were extinguished. Harun groped about in the dark until his hand touched him. Fudayl said: "Ah! If only such a soft hand could find salvation from the God's torment!" Then he said: "Commander of the Believers! Be prepared to answer God on the Day of Resurrection, for thou wilt be displayed to every Muslim, one by one, and they will seek justice from thee." Harun began to weep. 'Abbas said (to Fudayl): "Be silent! Thou hast mortally wounded the Commander of the Believers." (Fudayl) said: "O Haman!"<sup>1013</sup> Thou and thy like have brought him to perdition; and yet thou sayest that *I* have wounded him!" Harun said to him: "Thou callest him Haman because thou have equated me with Pharaoh." Then he placed a thousand dinars in front of Fudayl and said: "This has been lawfully obtained, from the dowry of my mother." (Fudayl) said: "I say to thee that thou must let go of all thou possessest and return it to its (lawful) owners, and yet thou givest this to me?" He rose and left him and did not accept the money.

'Umar (bin) 'Abd al-'Aziz<sup>1014</sup> said to Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurazi:<sup>1015</sup> "Tell me of the qualities of justice." He answered: "Be the

<sup>1012</sup> This is Ghazzali's exegesis of the preceding Quranic verse.

<sup>1013</sup> Haman: a reference to Haman, the wicked chief minister of Pharaoh, in the story of Moses. He shares the same name and character with the chief minister of Persian king Ahasuerus in *Esther* in the Bible. (See the translator's *The Old Testament: An Islamic Perspective*, or *Moses in The Bible: An Islamic Perspective* series, for more about the question of the identity of Haman.)

<sup>1014</sup> 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, a caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, reigned AH99-101/717-720CE.

<sup>1015</sup> Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurazi: an authority on Tradition who died in AH117/735CE.

father of any Muslim junior to thee. Be the son of any who is senior to thee. Be the brother of any one at thine own level. Punish each person according to the sin. Beware that thou dost not beat anyone out of anger, for then thy place will be in hell."

One of the ascetics went to the caliph of his time. (The caliph) said: "Give me some counsel." He said: "I went on a journey to China. The king had lost his hearing and wept much, saying: 'I do not weep because my hearing has become defective. Rather, I weep because the oppressed are crying at my gate and I do not hear them. However, my eyes function. Send a herald to announce that whoever is oppressed should wear red clothing.' Then, every day he would sit on an elephant and go out and call any person wearing red. O Commander of the Believers! That was an unbeliever who had such compassion on the servants of God Most High! Thou art a believer and from the household of the Messenger (S). Look how thy compassion is!"

Abu Qilabah<sup>1016</sup> went to 'Umar (bin) 'Abd al-'Aziz. ('Umar) said: "Give me some counsel." He said: "From the time of Adam (A) until today, no caliph has remained except thee." ('Umar) said: "Explain!" He said: "The first caliph who will die will be thou."<sup>1017</sup> ('Umar) said: "Explain." He said: "If God Most High is with thee, what is there to fear? If He is not with thee, where wilt thou take shelter?" ('Umar) said: "What thou hast said is enough."

Sulayman (bin) 'Abd al-Malik<sup>1018</sup> was the caliph. One day he was thinking and said: "In this world how much I have enjoyed myself! What will be my condition at the Resurrection?" He sent someone to Abu Hazim, who was the scholar and ascetic of the age. He said: "Send me a sample of that with which thou breakest thine obligatory fast." (Abu Hazim) sent him some roasted bran and said: "I eat of this at night." When Sulayman saw that, he wept. He was greatly affected by this and fasted for three days, not eating anything. On the third evening, he broke his fast with the roasted bran. It is said that he lay with his wife that night (and his wife) conceived his son 'Abd al-'Aziz, who was unique in the world for justice and resembled 'Umar Khattab (R). And it is said that all of this was the blessing of that good intention and that food which he had eaten.

'Umar 'Abd al-'Aziz was asked: "What was the cause of thy repentance?" He said: "One day I was beating a male slave. He said: 'Remember that night the morning of which will be the Resurrection.' I took that to heart."

<sup>1016</sup> Abū Qilābah: No other information about him from available standard sources at present.

<sup>1017</sup> So the HK text. AA has "The first caliph who will desire a reward will be thou." The difference is a single dot. HK has *khwāhad murd*, while AA has *khwāhad muzd*.

<sup>1018</sup> Sulaymān bin 'Abd al-Malik: See Note 814.

One of the great saw Harun al-Rashid at 'Arafat standing on hot pebbles barefooted and bareheaded saying: "O Lord God! Thou art Thou, and I am I. My work is always to attend to sin; and Thy work is always to attend to forgiveness. Have mercy upon me!" That great one said: "Look how the almighty of the earth is lamenting before the Almighty of the heavens!"

'Umar 'Abd al-'Aziz said to Abu Hazim: "Give me some counsel." He said: "Lie upon the ground and kiss it. Whatever thou holdest lawful for death to find with thee, keep. Keep away from whatever thou dost not hold lawful (to be found with thee at death); for it may be that death is near."

Therefore, the possessor of sovereign power must keep these stories before him and accept these counsels and others that have been given. He should seek counsel from every learned person he sees. Every learned person who sees rulers should counsel them in like manner and not hold back the word of truth, nor make them prideful, for then he will be a partner in their acts of injustice.

THE NINTH RULE is that he should not be content that he himself restrains oppression, but he should discipline his slaves, servants, and representatives, for he will be responsible for their injustices. 'Umar Khattab (R) wrote a letter to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari<sup>1019</sup> who was his appointee: "Moreover, the most fortunate of those having subjects is that person whose subjects are fortunate in him. The most miserable person is he whose subjects are miserable because of him. Beware! Do not be extravagant, as thine officials will be the same. Then thy similitude will be that of the animal that sees some grass and eats glutonously of it and grows fat. Its fatness will be its destruction, because for that reason it will be slaughtered and eaten."

In the Torah, it is found: "Any injustice that is done by an officer of the ruler and (the ruler) remains silent, (the ruler) has committed. He shall be held accountable for it." The ruler must know that there is no one more defrauded and more lacking in intelligence than he who sells his own religion and future life for another (temporal) world. All officials and servants serve for their own worldly portion and make injustice attractive to the eye of the ruler in order to send him to hell and to reach their own objectives. What enemy is greater than the one who works for thy destruction for the few unlawful dirhams that he will obtain?

In short, a person is not observing justice with his subjects whose own officers and servants do not keep to justice, (nor is) a person who is

<sup>1019</sup> Abu Musa al-Ash'ari: Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, a Companion of the Prophet, he was the appointed governor of Basrah by 'Umar and the governor of Kufah by 'Uthman. He was an arbiter on the side of 'Ali in the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah. Noted for his recitation of the Quran and his piety, he was also a courageous soldier.

not just with his own family, children, and slaves. He does not do this unless he observes justice first inside his own body. That justice is that he restrain injustice, appetite, and anger from his own power of reason so that they become the prisoners of reason and religion rather than that reason and religion should become their prisoners. Most people have enlisted their power of reason for the service of their appetites and anger, and they devise some subterfuge so that appetite and anger may achieve their goals. Intelligence is of the essence of the angels and the armies of God Most High, while appetite and anger are the armies of Iblis. How can a person who has imprisoned the army of God Most High in the hands of the army of Iblis do justice to others? So, the sun of justice first appears in the breast, then its light falls upon the family, then it spreads to one's attendants, then the sunbeams reach one's subjects. Whoever expects sunbeams without the sun is seeking the impossible.

Know that justice arises from the perfection of the intellect; the perfection of the intellect is that one see matters as they are, perceive their internal true nature, and be not deceived by appearances. For example, if he withholds justice for the sake of the world, he looks at what his objective from the world is. If the objective is that he eat his own food, he must understand that he is a beast in the form of a man, for gluttony is the work of quadrupeds. If he does it so that he may wear silken garments, he is a woman in the form of a man, for beautification is the work of women. If he does it to purge his anger on his enemy, he is a beast of prey in the form of a man, for tearing apart and quarreling is the work of predators. If he does it so that people will serve him, he is an ignoramus in the form of a rational being, for if he were rational, he would know that they are all servants of their own stomachs and serve their own appetites and pleasures. They have made of him the net for (the satisfaction of) their own appetites. The prostrations that they make are for themselves. The sign of that is if they hear false rumors that the governorship and post will be given to another, all of them will fly from him and start to seek favor with that other governor. Wherever they think there is gold and silver, there they will be, bearing their prostrations and service! So, in truth, this is not service; rather, it is mockery. The rational person is he who sees the true nature and spirit of affairs, not their outward appearance. The true nature of these affairs is as has been said; whoever does not realize this is not intelligent. The place for whoever is neither intelligent nor just is hell. Because of this, reason is at the head of all happiness.

THE TENTH RULE is that a ruler is usually haughty, and from haughtiness, anger becomes dominant and invites him to revenge. Anger is the enemy of reason and its blight. Its treatment we shall describe in

the chapter on Anger in the Pillar of the Destroyers.<sup>1020</sup> However, when (anger) overcomes, he must endeavor to lean towards forgiveness in all affairs, and make a habit of generosity and patience. He must know that when he makes this his habit, he will be like the prophets, Companions, and the saints. But, when he gives rein to his anger, he is like the Turks, Kurds, and foolish people who are like beasts of prey and beasts of burden.

It is related that when Abu Ja'far<sup>1021</sup> was caliph he ordered that a person who had committed some treachery be executed. Mubarak bin Fadalah<sup>1022</sup> was present. He said: "O Commander of the Believers, first listen to a Tradition of the Messenger (S)." (Abu Ja'far) said: "Speak." (Mubarak) said: "Hasan Basri (R), narrates that the Messenger said: 'On the Day of Judgment, at the time when all mankind is gathered on one plain, a herald will cry: "Whoever has a friend with God Most High arise!" No one will arise save the person who has forgiven another.'" (Abu Ja'far) said: "Remove your hands from him, for I have forgiven him."

Most of the anger of rulers comes from someone's insulting them and they try to shed his blood. At that moment, they should remember that which Jesus (A) said to John (the Baptist) (A): "Thank whoever says something to thee and speaks the truth. If he tells a lie, thou shouldst be more thankful, for a good deed will be credited to thine account without any effort on thy part." That is, the acts of worship of that person will be credited to thine account.

They were saying about someone in the presence of the Messenger (S): "He is a very strong man," He asked: "Why (do ye say that)?" They replied: "He throws down whomever he wrestles and he overcomes everyone." The Messenger (S) said: "Strong and manly is that person who overcomes his own anger, not he who overcomes another person." And he (S) said: "There are three things by which, if anyone acquires them, his faith will be complete: when he is seized by anger that he not make some vain design; when he is pleased that he not exceed what is right; and when he is powerful that he not take more than is his right."

'Umar (R) said: "Do not put faith in any person so long as thou hast not seen him at the time of his anger. Do not put faith in any person so long as thou hast not tested him at the time of his avidity."

<sup>1020</sup> Chapter Four of the Third Pillar, *The Destroyers*.

<sup>1021</sup> Abu Ja'far: Abū Ja‘far al-Maṇṣūr, the second Abbasid caliph (rgd. AH136-158/754-775CE). He founded Baghdad in AH145/762-3CE and made it the capital of the Abbasid caliphate. He was commonly known as Abu Ja'far.

<sup>1022</sup> Mubārik bin Fadālāh: a teacher of Sulayman bin Harb who died AH224/839CE. This would place him in the 2nd Islamic (8th CE) century. (IKh)

'Ali bin al-Husayn (R) went to the mosque one day. Someone was berating him. His slaves made for that person, but he said: "Do not touch him." Then he said to the man: "There is much more about me that is concealed from thee. Is there anything that I can do for thee?" The man became ashamed. Then 'Ali bin al-Husayn took off his tunic and gave it to him and he ordered a thousand dirhams for him. As the man was leaving, he was saying: "I swear that this man is none other than a descendant of the Messenger." It is also been related about ('Ali), that he called out twice for a slave, but (the young man) did not answer. "Didst thou not hear me?" ('Ali) demanded. He said: "I did." "Why didst thou not answer?" He said: "I was certain that thou wouldest not punish me because of thy character and good nature." ('Ali) said: "Thank God that my slave is safe from me." He<sup>1023</sup> had a slave who, one day, broke the leg of a sheep. ('Ali) asked: "Why didst thou do that?" He replied: "I did it deliberately in order to anger thee." ('Ali) said: "Now I shall be angry at the person who taught thee that!"—he meant Iblis—and he set the slave free. Someone called him<sup>1024</sup> a bad name. He said: "Young man, there is a steep pass between me and hell. If I cross that pass, I have no fear of thy words. If I cannot overlook (them), I myself am worse than thou hast said."

The Messenger (S) said: "There are people who, by gentleness and forgiveness, reach the degree of the faster and the one who spends the night in prayer; and there are those whose names are recorded in the journal of the tyrants while they have no sovereignty except over their own families." And the Messenger (S) said: "There is a gate to hell through which no person enters unless he gives rein to his anger in opposition to the Law."

It is related that one day Iblis went to Moses (A) and said: "I shall teach thee three things so that thou will have need of me instead of God Most High." Moses said: "What are those three things?" He answered: "Beware of haste; for I play with whoever is hasty and impetuous as a child plays with a ball. Beware of women, for I have not laid any trap in the path of the people of which I am more certain than women. And third, beware of miserliness; for I bring the religion and world of whoever is a miser to loss."

The Messenger (S) said: "God Most High fills the heart with security and faith of whoever swallows his anger and is able to control it. God Most High dresses with the robe of greatness whoever does not put on the garments of ostentation so as to humble himself before God Most High." And the Messenger (S) said: "Woe unto the person who becomes angry and forgets God Most High's anger at him."

<sup>1023</sup> In the AA text, the protagonist is Abu Dharr instead of 'Ali bin al-Husayn.

<sup>1024</sup> The AA text also ascribes this to Abu Dharr rather than 'Ali bin al-Husayn.

Someone said to the Messenger (S): "Teach me some thing by which I may reach heaven." He said: "Do not become angry and heaven is thine." (The man) said: "Another." He said: "Desire nothing from another person and heaven is thine." (The man) said: "Another." He said: "After finishing the obligatory afternoon formal prayer, ask for forgiveness seventy times so that thou may be forgiven the sins of seventy years." (The man) said: "I do not have seventy years of sin." He said: "The sins of thy mother." (The man) said: "My mother does not have many sins." He said: "Those of thy father." (The man) said: "My father does not have many sins." He said: "Those of thy brothers."

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (R) says that the Messenger (S) was dividing some property when someone said: "This division is not according to God Most High," that is, it was not fair. Ibn Mas'ud told this to the Messenger (S). He grew angry and his face turned red. He said nothing more than: "May God Most High have mercy upon my brother Moses, for he was more tormented than this and he endured it."

Let all of these Traditions and stories suffice as counsel for the people of power. If the foundation of faith is in place, it will influence them. If it does not, it is a sign that their hearts are devoid of faith and nothing has remained with them except the talk on their tongues. Talk of the faith that is in one's heart is one thing, and faith another. I do not know how the true nature of faith lies in the soul of the official who throughout the year accepts thousands of unlawful dirhams and dinars and gives (that money) to another so that he is answerable for all. At the Resurrection, all will be taken back from him while the benefit will be given to others. This is the utmost limit of heedlessness and un-Muslim like behavior. *Peace!*